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IN THIS ISSUE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY
The Threatening Thirties

ELMER DAVIS
Reviews "Progress and Catastrophe" by Stanley Casson

LOUIS UNTERMEYER
Reviews "The Fall of the City" by Archibald MacLeish

W. H. AUDEN
Spain

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES
Reviews "The Tree Falls South" by Wellington Roe

WRITERS OF THE THIRTIES

Top: Hervey Allen, Margaret Mitchell, James Hilton. Bottom: Vincent Sheean, John O'Hara, James T. Farrell.

"What, if anything, does literature show to be the prevailing time-current of the thirties? I believe it to be fear" . . .

(See page 3)

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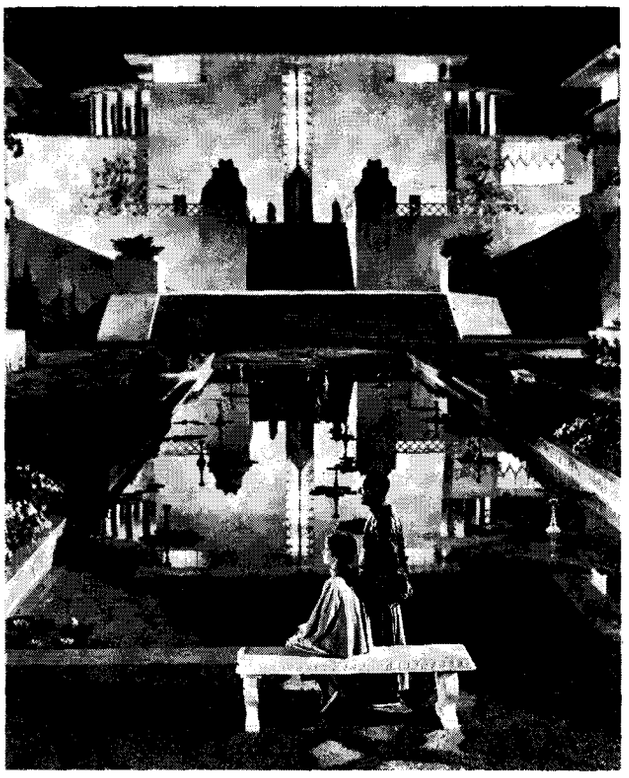
The Threatening Thirties

How Books Record the Dominant Emotion of the Current Decade

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THE heart of our thirties beats in literature, which as always is a sensitive machine for recording the emotions. This heart itself is infinitely complex, more so than the emotions, which after the human kind, can be simplified, oversimplified if you please, into a few passions. Does one passion in each literary era rule over the rest? It has been the custom of historians to assume that such is the case, and upon so simple a classification are their Augustan, their ages of silver, of gold, their Renaissances built. One German, recently dead, goes further in this analysis. Oswald Spengler in his "Decline of the West," written in war time, states categorically that all works of art in a given period manifest the definite quality, the ruling passion, of that period, no matter how different in other respects these crystallizations of the contemporary intellect may seem to be.



NIRVANA WITH MODERN CONVENIENCES
From "Lost Horizon" (Columbia Pictures).

It is this thesis which I wish to examine with our nineteen thirties in mind, not as a propagandist for Spengler, but rather to make use, if use can be made, of this point of view, this method of analysis. It is obvious that Spengler's dictum needs qualification for a short-range survey. He is thinking in broad terms, such as the Renaissance, or Alexandrianism, where centuries are involved. When the perspective is narrowed to decades, allowance must be made for the well-known phenomenon of overlapping times. There are plenty of simon-pure Victorians alive and practising in our thirties; indeed in a given community it is always possible to find sets of ideas, prejudices, or imaginative concepts which range thirty, forty, or even a half century apart. The Southern mountaineer and the Jewish intellectual of New York belong in different time areas of civilization. Yet with all qualifications made, it should still be possible to get some results from Spengler's theory, especially if one takes so sensitive a product as literature. We must, of course, exclude from the discussion those types of popular books, written to a formula, which vary little in character from generation to generation, since their purpose is always to escape unpleasant reality. Yet even a test of best-sellers seems to show that there is a strong, if indefinite, ruling interest in any given year. When a best-seller is not a stereotyped romance, but such a book as "Anthony Adverse" or "The Story of Philosophy," the fact that it sweeps through the majority of literate minds in a country with little resistance seems to prove a residuum of identity in these minds which one ought to be able to define.

What, if anything, does literature show to be the prevailing time-current of the thirties? I believe it to be fear, although fear is too strong a word for its quiet margins, and panic would better describe some of its hurrying tides. This fear is sometimes conscious, sometimes subconscious. It ranges from a skeptical inquiry into the possible disintegration of culture as we have known it, to the deep pessimism of convinced alarm. Sometimes the writer is inspired by what he may call the decline of capitalism. Sometimes the underlying fear is of war. Sometimes, and very commonly, the writer is concerned with the revival of the brutality of more desperate ages. Sometimes the unrest which spreads through a book is a reflection of the author's belief that democracy is bankrupt; sometimes jubilantly or fearfully he hails the rise of the proletariat, or the reappearance of the strong arm and submission to the state. More subtle is what has been recently called the flight from reason toward pure emotionalism, where men are encouraged to exchange their liberties for the joys of being the most powerful of animals. Again, this fear is only the weariness of a trading civilization, such a weariness as may have overcome the initiative of the Byzantines. Any of these fears, skepticisms, distrusts may be justified or unjustified. The fear remains.

It will be at least interesting to test with this hypothesis some of the successful books of the last half dozen years. The test provides only a point of view from which one aspect only of a book can be seen, but that aspect is important. If books show fear, whether Grade A, Grade B, or Grade C, it is a fair conclusion that some of this fear is related to a general mood of our society. But to be significant these books should not be chosen from those written by what Mary Colum calls the tradesmen of literature. Manufactured books, got out for sales, exploit the permanent proclivities of human nature, and will be a sure index of what the public wants, but by no means a sure indication of how it is feeling. The drug-

Next Week

BEFORE I FORGET
By BURTON RASCOE
Reviewed by Bernard DeVoto

THE ROAD TO REUNION
By PAUL BUCK
Reviewed by Howard W. Odum

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store-shelf writer is too insensitive himself to time his book accurately to the immediate present.

I shall choose, therefore, for analysis a group of recent books of some merit, avoiding books of propaganda for this and that, since usually they do not touch the imagination. And I will stick to American literature (with a few English examples widely read here) since if fear of the kind I describe is manifest in American books, the argument is stronger than if I should draw my evidence from Europe where men have been palpably afraid.

First the hard-boiled books, the school of cruelty, vulgarity, and terror, of which Hemingway is chief. His case is obvious. His books are all books of fear—the fear of physical violence which leads to an overemphasis upon danger, desperation, and hate; the fear of mental or spiritual disintegration which shows itself in descriptions of panic and chaos. The world he sees is a post-war world where sensitive disillusioned spirits strike before they are struck and drink in order to forget.

James Farrell's "Studs Lonigan" series reflects a different mood. Here is an emphatic break-away from the genteel tradition. This rough and grimy life is defiantly narrated as a true picture of what the American city is really like for youth of the masses. There are no confidences here, no graces, no expectations of cultural progress. The writer himself protests by implication against a training in toughness which is obviously preparing a society careless of civilization.

John O'Hara is more difficult to analyze. His books are so planed down into realism that it is difficult to tell how much satire is intended. But certainly he is as distrustful of the vulgarity of the life of the small-town bourgeoisie as Farrell of his Irish micks. Consciously or subconsciously he wishes you to see that there is no future for this kind of American civilization. It is cheap, stale, dead in imagination, although still economically powerful, and emotional enough to be unhappy. His books, so far as I have read them, have failures for heroes.

Or to strike into the higher altitudes where tragedy resides, consider Robinson Jeffers, a poet whose preoccupation is with a California which superficially is the realtor's paradise celebrated in the advertisements. But he ruthlessly strips off the surface, shows us blood-lusts and sex-rages, and makes the bare ranges, stark canyons, and roaring beaches a background for emotions so primitive that they threaten the continuity of folksy California life.

The break-away from the genteel tradition in American literature had to come, but did it have to go as far as this? Would it have gone so far, had there been no war, no depression, no weakening of the tradition by which at least we thought we lived? These writers are not concerned with answering yes, or no, but their books answer for them. They have seen writing on the wall.

Another group of books far more widely read than these would seem to be entirely negative in their reaction. There is no obvious fear in "Anthony Adverse," in "Gone With the Wind," in the regional stories such as the recent crop of Maine novels, or the farm stories of the Midwest, or Robert Frost's poems of New England. But they are not negative when properly tested. Those two elephantine best-sellers, "Anthony Adverse" and "Gone With the Wind," are perfect examples of how the tradition of life in an era of uncertainty can be made to stir the imagination in our own age of uncertainty. Of course their success was due to many other causes, yet they date with us in spite of earlier romantic elements.

"Anthony Adverse" begins like a novel by Scott or Dumas, but rapidly turns into a picaresque story, the adventures of a youth in a difficult world. Its great success, in my opinion, was due to its spice of modernity in an ancient formula for romance. The hero grows up and succeeds in communities turbulent with war and reconstruction. He finds no settled society and seeks none, but makes his way and intensifies experience in a rough tide that often flows against him. He does not pursue security like the heroes of the Victorian novels, but rather thrives upon chance and adversity. And at the end he undergoes a spiritual reconstruction symbolic of the need of faith, and willingness for renunciation, characteristic of turbulent periods, and utterly unlike the last chapters of the novels of the nineties.

"Gone With the Wind" under analysis shows a like correspondence with the time currents of the thirties. The characters in this novel, with the exception of Scarlett, are not impressive, the story often loses itself in details, but one theme is never lost in its many pages. This is tradition, oral as well as written. It is specifically the tradition of an American period the bitterness and devastation of which had been half forgotten in the romantic sentimentalizing of the old South. It is the traditional memory of the breakdown of an age of confidence into an age of defeat, disillusion, and disintegration. It is a vivid reminder of the aftermath of war as it happened once in a country which was only scratched by the last great conflict. It is too much to call Miss Mitchell's book a warning; yet certainly its narrative responds to the fear in every sensitive heart for the future of another culture also threatened by reconstruction.

I do not wish to extend this survey to wearisome lengths, therefore I shall merely note that the sudden popularity of regional stories and regional poems is also not without significance. From Maine to California these poems and narratives of the soil, some pessimistic and satiric in tone, others nostalgic or challenging, seem to spring from a wide and deep desire to remind us of the good earth from which we sprang, which we have cruelly abused, yet which is more permanent than cities, and more calculable in its effects upon character than the rootless mechanisms of industrialized urban life. If the traditionalists warn us of what is or may be happening, these regionalists remind us of the land that still is a home under the sun and the rain, when everything else seems on the move, speeding toward an uncalculated destination.

A still more curious manifestation of the fear which leads to spiritual unrest is to be found in the books of the seekers. Many books belong to this class, and especially much drama and poetry. I shall speak, however, only of one genre of writing which has lately been so successful as to supply a career for journalists who long to strike deeper than journalism. There is always a type book in such a genre. The one I should choose here would be Vincent Sheean's "Personal History," although since its date a dozen other ex-correspondents have followed his lead. "Personal History" is much more than a foreign correspondent's autobiography. Sheean's job was to get the news, but in getting it, he learned to think what it meant, and so by natural gradations to seek the meaning of events for a civilization which, like most of us, he had taken for granted. One finds him, therefore, in Morocco, in China, in Russia, not merely recording what happened, but questioning, weighing East against West, Red against White, Russian against Arab, Chinese against the American. He wants to know, because unless we grasp what this new turbulent world means for the individual raised in the West and conditioned by a stable culture, we are in constant danger of a false security and an ignorant confidence. Gunther, Negley Farson, the Dutchman Matisse, and many others both in fiction and autobiography, are trying, like Sheean, to break through the crust of the news to see what lies underneath. Nor is this seeking confined to international affairs. There are dozens of books dealing with local themes that belong in the same category.

I shall pass over such obvious reflections of malaise as the proletarian novels so-called, which are usually accounts of what a bourgeois intellectual thinks a laborer's mind is like. And also the new crop of exotics expressing (like "Lost Horizon") the desire of civilized man to escape from the results of his own zeal for progress into some palmy island or Nirvana decorated (like Hilton's) with the spoils of civilization and dedicated to thinking about the simple life.

(*Continued on page* 14)

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Headed for the Stone Age

PROGRESS AND CATASTROPHE. By Stanley Casson. New York: Harper & Bros. 1937. $3.

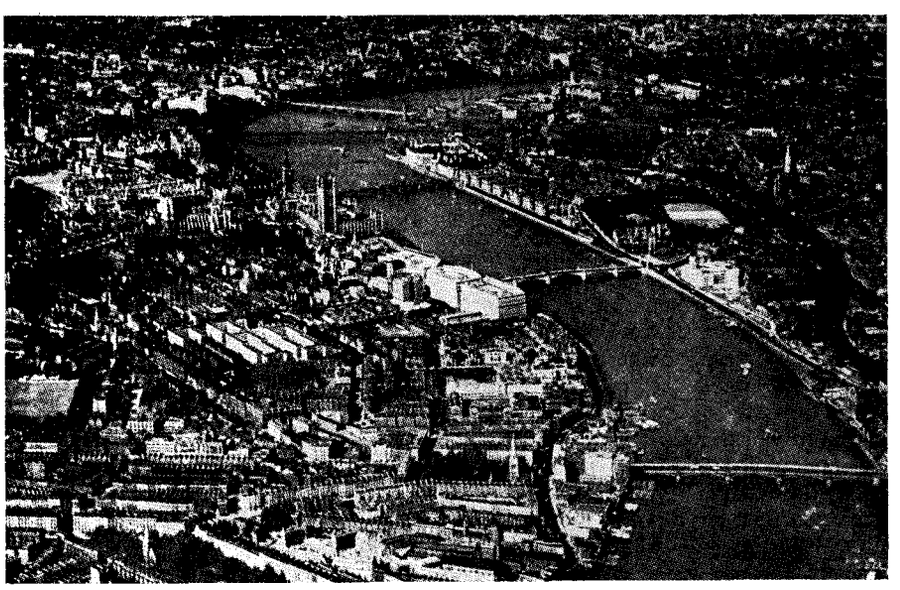
Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

MR. CASSON, the Oxford archeologist, is disturbed by the fact that "we seem in 1937 to be back once more struggling to solve primitive problems that in the Neolithic and the Bronze Ages men thought they had solved once and for all." Not merely our antediluvian ancestors but even some of the dumb animals had an understanding of collective security, coöperation for the common safety, which large groups of civilized mankind have lately discarded; Darwin pointed out that in many animal societies there was coöperation, not competition, for survival, though his more individualistic expounders forgot about it. So long as men were worried every day about the next day's food they seem to have coöperated too, but once they had attained the rudiments of stability and security they sought out many inventions and turned them to pernicious uses. "Man's task was to cultivate the social and moral qualities at the same time as his practical inventions. When the former developed too fast his whole social fabric would be in danger of destruction, if he did not also take practical measures to defend what he had created against external attack; when his practical inventiveness ran ahead of his moral consciousness and social organization, then man has equally faced destruction. Perhaps today we are in this stage." Perhaps is a mild word for it.

So, with the recognition that history never repeats itself, the author looks back over history and pre-history in search of tendencies that make for survival and those that lead to destruction. Special attention is paid to the two great collapses of Western civilization, the first about 1200 B.C. and the other which has become known as the fall of the Roman Empire; but so conscientious a historian unfortunately cannot get much out of them for the edification of his contemporaries. The "fall" of Rome was the epilogue to a long slow decay whose causes cannot be assessed with any accuracy; the fall of the Hittites and Minoans appears to have been due merely to the invasion of barbarians who could fight better (our Aryan ancestors, if that is any consolation). But in the case of the Minoans at least—whose civilization, so far as can be judged from its surviving art, was possibly the most seemly, the most truly civilized, that man has yet evolved—there had been a lowering of standards before the fall. For centuries the Minoans trusted to isolation, with a big navy and a tiny army; then they seem to have expanded on the mainland, taught their barbarian subjects how to build and maneuver warships, and were presently upset by them. The Romans, too, were overthrown by barbarians in their own armies. "Protective warfare," observes Mr. Casson in connection with the Sumerians, who seem to have invented military organization, "has preserved civilization in its most critical moments, as aggressive warfare has destroyed it." But since the technique is open to almost everybody the critical point is obviously the purpose for which ability to wage war is employed.

That purpose, says the author, must be collective security; and of the menaces to collective security the worst is fascism (since communist theory aims toward unity even if it would impose that unity by force). "The deliberate segregation of men into groups between which communication is deliberately denied is a fantastic move back to the most primitive conditions." True enough; a world of fascist states would certainly go out in a *bellum omnium contra omnes.* But beyond the obvious point that non-fascist states had better hang together Mr. Casson suggests no remedies; and his suggestion of a "new Byzantium" that might preserve a remnant of the old civilization (which, he feels, is not on the brink of collapse but has already collapsed) goes either too far or not far enough. It might include, he thinks, England, France, Holland, Belgium, Scandinavia, and America; but Scandinavia could hardly be defended against fascist powers which had absorbed the rest of Europe, even if England, France, and the Low Countries could survive fascist air raids. Collective security had better be more collective than that, unless Europe is ready to sign off and leave to America alone the function which Constantinople performed during the last Dark Age.

All this necessarily omits many of Mr. Casson's stimulating observations. He covers a great deal of ground, indeed about all the ground there is, and doubtless is often wrong; but he is worth reading even if you may not agree with him more than about sixty per cent.



LONDON FROM THE AIR (*From "Progress and Catastrophe"*)
"An example of a city built on the assumption that it would not be attacked."

Harlem Prophet

THE INCREDIBLE MESSIAH. By Robert Allerton Parker. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by A. J. LIEBLING

"THE Incredible Messiah" is not as good a title as "God in a Rolls-Royce," the study of Father Divine which John Hoshor published last Fall, but Robert Allerton Parker has written a much sounder book. Instead of treating the little brown prophet of Harlem as a unique phenomenon, Parker, like a religious entomologist, preserves him with a spray of antiseptic words and pins him in his proper place among the other messiahs. He lists dozens of them, from one Kondrati Selivanov, who "announced himself to be the incarnation of the Diety" in Russia in 1770, to Hung Hsui Ch'uan, who identified himself with Jesus Christ and led the T'ai P'ing Rebellion. Identifying Father Divine, né George Baker, as a slightly ludicrous example of a recurrent type, Parker makes him appear so credible that he is almost uninteresting. Coinciding with the recent schisms among the Little Brown Father's followers, the book has something of the quality of an epitaph for a cult.

The "mystery" of Father Divine, which advertised him among Negroes and engaged the curiosity of newspapermen and social workers, was the source of his money. He ostentatiously refused to take

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VAN GOGH'S PAINTING OF HIS HOUSE AT ARLES

up collections at his meetings. The "mystery," however, was completely cleared up by a pair of courageous and likable colored houseworkers, Thomas and Verinda Brown, who announced last Spring that they had given him all their worldly wealth before the veil fell from their eyes and they quit the angelic life. They said that all the other "angels" also turned over their earnings, but that Father ordered secrecy. Angels feared he would "take their spirit away," *i.e.*, kill them by telepathy, if they were disloyal even in thought. Thomas and Verinda, in Father's own words, "iterated and reiterated" their story. They gave it to *The New Yorker* last spring and that magazine used it in a study of Father Divine. They furnished affidavits to William Lesselbaum, a lawyer who was suing Father last November (God alleged he was destitute). Parker quotes vast gobs of their affidavits. Other angels split off and demanded the return of their funds. It was the suit of one of these angels which led to the stabbing of a white process server when he invaded the "Heaven" on 115th St. last month.

Without his mysterious altruism as a selling point, it appears doubtful that Divine will gain new adherents. The number of the old ones, as Parker indicates, is limited to perhaps 5,000. As opportunities for employment outside the totalitarian community increase, the number of these remaining angels will decline. Parker, although acute through most of his story, remarks on "an unexplained accession of interest" in the cult in 1930. That was the first year of the depression. When hard times come again we will grow a new crop of Messiahs. This appears to be the definitive book on this one.

Van Gogh's Letters

DEAR THEO, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF VINCENT VAN GOGH. Edited by Irving Stone. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1937. $3.75.

Reviewed by OLIVER LARKIN

NOW that color prints of the *Sunflowers* are as eagerly bought as *September Morn* and Whistler's *Mother*, Vincent's canonization is complete. Beside each canvas in the recent Museum of Modern Art exhibition of Van Gogh were placed pertinent quotations chosen from the more than six hundred letters written to his brother Theo, and after Theo's death arranged and translated by the latter's widow. Her three volumes, containing one of the most profound self-revelations ever made by one man to another, have long since been out of print. Irving Stone, author of the biographical novel "Lust for Life," has made a one-volume condensation, attempting "to keep in every line Vincent wrote that has retained its beauty, significance, and importance, and to eliminate the countless pages of repetition, unimportant detail, and comment which have since lost both meaning and value." Stone's elimination of tiresome financial discussion, of reference to painters and to works of art which would be meaningless to the layman, and of those phrases in which, almost word for word, Van Gogh repeated himself, is a real service to the reader.

Condensation on this scale, however, means distortion. The successive crises in Vincent's life consumed more time, his development as an artist was more gradual and more complex, than this more summary version can convey. One also regrets Stone's failure to include, except in fragments, pages in which Van Gogh revealed with extraordinary insight the relation between artistic and social decadence in the eighties, his prophetic vision of a new art and a new world for the artist—paragraphs comparing '84 with '48 and Guizot with Michelet, describing the involuntary grouping of people on either side of invisible barricades, the final difference between his own revolutionary attitude and that of conservative Theo. Such lines would go far to correct our one-sided picture of Van Gogh the abnormal and defiant individual. Questionable also is the editor's rearrangement of sentences and paragraphs within the letters, a regrouping which makes smoother reading but takes unwarranted liberty with the often erratic but highly characteristic sequence of the painter's thought.

But every page of Mr. Stone's 572 supports his opinion "that Vincent was as great a writer and philosopher as he was a painter, that he was endowed with one of the most comprehensive gifts of understanding and expression that it has ever been the burden of one man to carry." Here is the disillusioned churchman,—"that icy coldness bewitched *me* in my youth,"—who could see that respectable mores were "perfectly absurd things which make of society a kind of lunatic asylum, a perfectly topsy-turvy world"; who profoundly knew the character of his sitters, old Père Tanguy, blue-coated Postman Roulin "who argues with such sweep in the style of Garibaldi," bearing "a silent gravity and tenderness for me like what an old soldier might have for a young man." Here is Van Gogh the inspired colorist, trying "to express the love of two lovers by a marriage of two complementary colors, their mingling and their opposition"; the luminous critic who remarked that a "meditative" figure by Rubens, in comparison with one by Rembrandt, "becomes a person who has retired to a corner for purposes of digestion," and who answered a critic of his own distortions by writing:

> Tell Serret that . . . if one photographed a digger he certainly would not appear to be digging. . . . Tell him that my great longing is to learn to make those very incorrectnesses, those deviations, remodellings, changes of reality, that they may become—yes, untruth if you like—but more true than the literal truth.

Theo treasured his brother's letters because he alone knew Vincent's greatness, sensed that "it would be really a remarkable book if one could see how much he has thought and how he remained himself." That judgment and that faith are now once more vindicated in "Dear Theo," an unintentional self-portrait of the Artist as a Man.

Oliver Larkin is in the department of art at Smith College.

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New Power for Poetry

THE FALL OF THE CITY. By Archibald MacLeish. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1937. 50 *cents.*

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

IT is partly Mr. MacLeish's own fault that his work has so often been appraised as a form, an extension of a theory, an exercise in technique. Mr. MacLeish has said in prose and implied in poetry that a poem exists in time and space independent of its origin and even of its subject, that emotion has little to do with poetry, and that the very test of a poem is its power to withstand emotion. His famous line that "a poem should not mean but be" has been quoted, misapplied, and used to prove that Mr. MacLeish believes in a purely abstract art, a detached and completely isolated poetry for poetry's sake.

This is a pity, for Mr. MacLeish's creative work has suffered because of his occasional theorizing. It has provoked controversy instead of appreciation; it has incited a few writers where it should have roused a great number of readers. This is all the more regrettable, for Mr. MacLeish the poet is not only a wiser person than Mr. MacLeish the theorist, but a much more stimulating one.

"The Fall of the City" is the latest contribution to the small literature of modern poetic drama, and it will probably be accorded the same reception which has marked the publication of Mr. MacLeish's recent collections. Leftists and rightists will quarrel about his allegiance; technicians will trace the ancestry of his diction and the novelty of its use. But it is to be hoped that no one will fail to emphasize the power of this poet's imagination and its magnificent immediacy. For one thing, this is a drama primarily for the ear rather than for the eye, the first American play in verse written for the radio. For another thing, the theme is perhaps the timeliest as well as the most violently debated in the world today.

The action, crisply described by the Announcer and elaborated by voices of messengers, orators, priests, and the crowd, takes place in the central plaza of a great city. Portents are in the air; a dead woman appears and prophesies. She tells them, not knowing what the words mean, that masterless men will take a master. The crowd is puzzled and fearful. A messenger appears warning the city that a ruthless conqueror is upon them. Orators, priests, and generals harangue the crowd, increasing uncertainty and inaction. Finally the conqueror appears; he comes out of the shadows and takes command. His visor opens and the Announcer tells the listeners that there is no one in the armor; the metal is only a shell, absolutely empty; "the push of a stiff pole at the nipple would topple it." But the people lie on the ground. They do not or will not see. They shout as though they had won a victory; the masterless men have found a master. The city falls.

Here, obviously, is an important and even tremendous subject, and the first hearing indicates that Mr. MacLeish has not missed a single dramatic opportunity. An examination of the printed work confirms the first impression. Here are all the technical excellences: the alternating shifts in accent; the adroit juxtaposition of oratory and plain speech; the variations of rhyme, assonance, and dissonance; above all, the atmosphere of suspense which this poet can communicate so well. The play is one mounting tension, thrilling in its evocation of terror and fatality. The reader is convinced that these are events, not images, that "the people invent their oppressors," and that, with the fall of the city, "the long labor of liberty" is ended.

The effectiveness of this verse play is increased by Mr. MacLeish's recognition of the resources of the radio and his employment of the Announcer as a combination of Greek Chorus and casual commentator. Writing for the radio, he has indicated a new power for poetry in the use of the word in action, without props or settings, the allusively spoken word and the "word-excited imagination." It is an exciting prospect, this new appeal directly to the ear, the ear which is "already half poet," and it is an experiment which is also a distinguished accomplishment.

Disraeli

SCENE AT A REHEARSAL OF "THE FALL OF THE CITY"

A Living Tapestry

A CARDINAL OF THE MEDICI. By Susan Hicks Beach. New York: Cambridge University Press (Macmillan). 1937. $3.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

SEVERAL of the best-loved volumes in my library are the "Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino," and in them the encyclopedic Dennistoun refers to the sojourn of Giuliano de' Medici at the court of Urbino, when "there was born to him a son, who, after being exposed in the streets in 1511, was sent to the foundling hospital and baptized Pasqualino. Removed to Rome and acknowledged in 1513, the child received an excellent education; and under the munificent patronage of the Medici became Cardinal Ippolito."

Titian, of course, painted his portrait. Mrs. Beach over four hundred years later deals with his life in a book to me both moving and absorbing. Her narrative purports to be written by the Pacifica, or whoever she was, who bore the future Cardinal. A name is never revealed. The narrative runs through the rule of three Popes and has for various backgrounds Urbino, Rome, Florence, Le Selve, Pagliano, Fondi, Itri, and Urbino again. Examine the notes to this book and you will see the extent of the author's documentation. Yet there is a fine combination of scholarship and auctorial skill. All the intrigue of the time covers the book like a network, and such personages as Castiglione and Cardinal Bembo loom in the figured tapestry. I have no stricture to make upon the recreated atmosphere of the period. Apparently fact is as little distorted as possible. There is distinction of style too. This is far from being an ordinary run-of-the-mine historical novel.

The young Ippolito died at the age of twenty-five. One forgets how young the great of that period were! His love for Giulia Gonzaga, and their thwarted romance, are beautifully related. He himself, running true to form, left a bastard son of his own. Though a minor figure among the Medici, Cardinal Ippolito is nevertheless a brilliant figure, and he has found a fictional biographer to do him justice in a fine and full-bodied book.

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The Writers' Congress

WE have received from the League of American Writers a call to attend the National Congress of American Writers to be held in this city over the first week-end of June. It is signed by twenty-two writers. For some of them we have the highest respect both as thinkers and as literary craftsmen; some of them strike us as considerably better at phrase-making than at thinking; some of them a perverted mind prohibits us from considering anything but lollipops. We are going to see that *The Saturday Review* has a representative at the Congress, a convinced spirit who has more youth and more belief than we can ever have again, but we intend to stay away. If we played golf we should be scrupulous, as a writer, to get in at least thirty-six holes on each of the three days.

We are passing up this convention of literary people from habit, from constitutional distaste, from a phobia of being bored, and from a variety of other motives. It is not that the purposes of the twenty-two writers seem to us anything but admirable. Well, some of them do seem meaningless, such as "to defend the political and social institutions that make for peace and encourage a healthy culture," which, in order to acquire meaning, would need more definition than it will get at the Congress. Some of them seem a little fantastic, as "to provide a center for the cultural activities of American writers in general, and a link between writers now separated by age or place of residence"—what are the cultural activities of writers except writing, and what would a center be?—are you proposing an edifice like a Y.M.C.A. or a foundation of good will like the Drama League?—and what do you propose to have the writers do when they get into such a center? Some of them are pretty loose and vague, as "to effect an alliance for cultural defense between American writers and all progressive forces in the nation"—some of the forces that seem progressive to us would cause pain to some of the boys, and we doubt that, even if they agree on the forces, they will find any way of effecting an alliance except more conventions.

We are certainly sympathetic with some of the purposes, especially that of defending freedom of thought and expression. But again a constitutional defect makes us differ from the delegates. We believe in getting out and raising hell when freedom of thought and expression is threatened, but passing resolutions has never interested us much. The delegates will get up and say splendid things, they will adopt some resounding resolutions which will use perfectly beautiful words to express the most admirable sentiments, and then they will come out to the street in a glow of righteous achievement and be a little surprised that the traffic could go on while people were being so stark. But freedom of thought and expression will be just where it was before the committee phrased the resolutions.

Conventions are just gatherings where people have a good time and the resolutions they pass are merely intended to show that the delegates' hearts are in the right place. The published works of some of the signers of this call are charged with scorn of the conventions held by the D. A. R., the Boy Scouts, and the Amalgamated Association of Embalmers. Those conventions are supposed by the literary to be tawdry and vulgar, but the only difference we can see is that the writers and the embalmers have different ideas about what constitutes a good time. And we don't need the resolutions for we already know where their hearts are, and we know too that no writer's heart is going to be changed at the Congress, any more than a Daughter of the American Revolution's is. The signers say that their ideas do not "have to be accepted on pain of intellectual excommunication." We'll take a bet on that.

We may instruct our representative to risk excommunication in the interest of experiment, and have him invite the delegates to bring one set of their ideas into conformity with another set. Our emotions — and our representative's — have been on the side of the Spanish government from the beginning; we, and he, have supported its cause with some money and some advice to more active sympathizers. But we should like the Congress to dissipate a paradox that troubles us. We are all on the side of the government because it is the elected government, because the attack on it is an attack on civilization made by the powers of barbarism, because its fight is the fight of democracy against the militarized state, because it stands for law as against force. But that is why we were on the side of England and France twenty years ago. Barbarism and military despotism were attacking civilization then, and democracy had to crush them in the name of law and reason and the hope of a better future. Then it strangely turned out that nothing of the sort had happened, that we had been misled by a skillful propaganda conducted by masters of the art; we were just credulous fools who pulled England's chestnuts out of the fire for her. And so on—consult the books of some of the delegates. So suppose our representative gets up in the Congress and asks whether the American sheep are baa-ing the way skillful propaganda directs them to, or whether the earlier situation has perhaps been misconstrued. Will he get any recantations? Will he be informed that it isn't propaganda when it's on the right side? Or will he be thrown out on his ear?

We don't, that is, believe these protestations about truth-seeking and the open mind. Our guess is that the delegates will go to the convention in full possession of the truth. They are as sure of the future as ever Joseph Smith or Alexander Dowie was, both of whom had a corner on truth. Listen to them prophesy: "Fascism will be encouraged and financed as an effective means of 'keeping labor in its place.' Even war will be used—it has been so used already—as the best way of breaking strikes." Thanks, we hold to the unfixed universe and a future with some unknowns in it.

That, probably, is what has most weight in our abstinence from conventions: the boys think of such a gathering as a dignified assemblage giving strength and unity to those who compose it and recessing in the end with a great deal done —and we don't. We like writers, but we like them writing, not making speeches and adopting resolutions. We haven't the slightest doubt that they will have their sentiments confirmed by the Congress and will come away from it thinking highly of one another, but we doubt that anything else will be accomplished. We can't help thinking of the assemblage as composed of the people who compose it. We've read their books and we have the most diverse opinions of them. Some of them are pretty formidable, but some of them are pretty frail. We know what they think; we could even put on the prophet's mantle and predict what they are going to say; we could certainly write in advance the resolutions they are going to adopt. Beyond that we have no belief in this Congress, and only one interest. That interest is pragmatic: will a committee report on the achievements of the last Congress and how they have been added upon in the interim, and what will the report say?

Do as We Say, Not as We Do. "Always verify your quotations . . . the Oxford one-volume Shakespeare, the 'Oxford Book of English Verse' . . . in fact, verify everything . . . a syllabus of English literature, one of American literature, one of American history."—Editorial page, *The Saturday Review*, Nov. 21, 1936.

". . . for instance Oliver Optic and James Henty . . . try us out with James T. Trowbridge or Tiffany Thayer."—Editorial page, *The Saturday Review*, May 15, 1937.

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Letters to the Editor: *Mr. Barrell Replies to Professor Stoll*

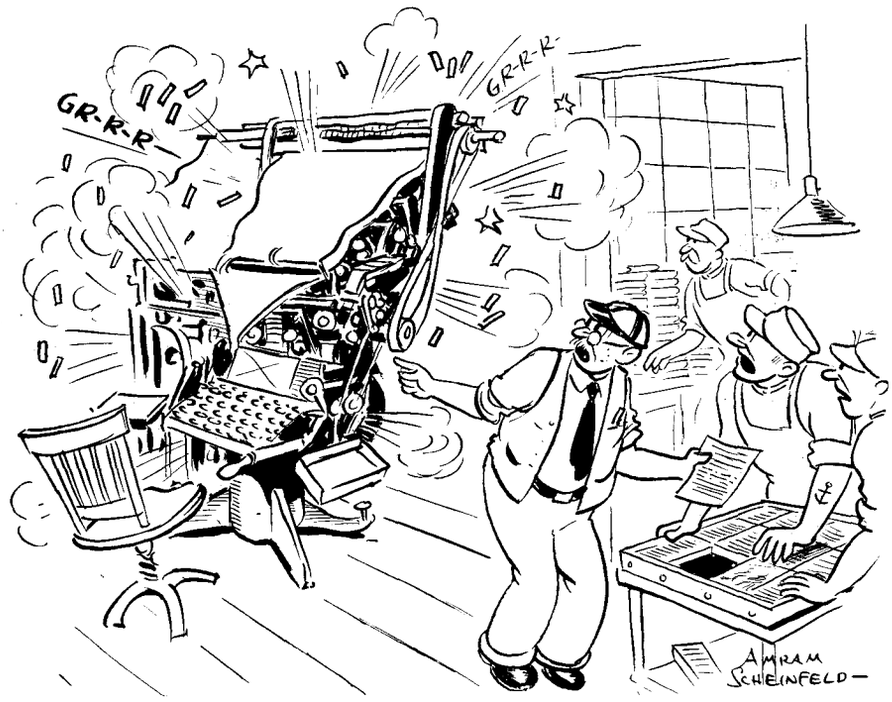
The Oxford Theory

SIR:—Professor Stoll seems to argue, if I read him aright, that disagreement with the orthodox Stratford canon is a type of "heresy" that in itself shows subnormal reasoning powers on the part of the skeptic. If such be the case, we must revise our opinion of the mentalities of such men as Henry Hallam, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lord Palmerston, John Bright, Mark Twain, Henry James, and Dr. Sigmund Freud (to name but seven out of seventy times that number), for every one of the above mentioned has put himself on record as a vigorous *disbeliever* in the Stratfordian synthesis.

Professor Stoll has evidently not troubled himself to read the basic books of Oxfordian research, which are Looney's "Shakespeare Identified" and Ward's "The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford." Instead, he devotes more than half his space to labored ridicule of a phase of Percy Allen's controversy with the late John Drinkwater. This reminds me of the time that one Alf Landon inaugurated a political campaign with a fighting talk on maple syrup. It is an ancient device of the political propagandist, adopted by the reviewer, and is known as "red herring drag" or "shoving the sham sample."

As a matter of fact, some thirty books have been published in corroboration and amplification of Looney's original findings. Dr. Gerald H. Rendall, former Principal of Victoria College, University of Liverpool and for fifteen years Headmaster of the Charterhouse School, has written three of these. Dr. Gilbert Slater, Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford University, a prominent member of the British Royal Historical Society and a recognized authority on Elizabethan economics, is the author of another important contribution in "Seven Shakespeares." Mrs. Eva Turner Clark's "Hidden Allusions In Shakespeare's Plays" can be found in every well-equipped library specializing in Shakespearean research. In airily dismissing her work as an alternate for bridge or backgammon, Professor Stoll's "criticism" runs true to form. I wonder whether he has actually read any of these books? Even Percy Allen's pamphlet seems to have reached him at second-hand, by way of John Drinkwater.

The Professor becomes difficult to follow at times, especially when he endeavors to confuse the Oxfordian case with the Baconian theory. The evidence is of a fundamentally different type, Oxfordians depending in no important particular upon crytograms, ciphers, or Rosicrusian symbols. Edward de Vere's personality, his known activities and writings, as well as the letters of his relatives and associates, and the comments of his contemporaries, answer hundreds of Shakespearean questions that remain mere conjectures in the minds of Stratfordians and Baconians alike. Dr. Stoll would have us believe that the Stratford man's life is a thoroughly documented record, whereas such is by no means the case. George Saintsbury refers to the orthodox life-story as "the great Perhaps."



"I WAS JUST SETTING SOME STUFF ABOUT AUTOMATIC WRITING."

Professor Stoll takes me to task because I do not tell him forthwith why it was that Lord Oxford never came forward to claim credit for the immortal plays. It is a leading question and one that will not be flinched under proper jurisdiction. From the vasty ocean of the Public Record office in London we have recently dredged up several documents which go far to explain this important circumstance. I have also completed of late at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D. C., an investigation into another phase of the mystery which should prove equally interesting. The main reason why it seems inadvisable to blurt out these matters at this time is a very practical one. My literary agent won't let me.

Ignoring the chief point of my argument in comparing similiarities in *situation plus phraseology*, as disclosed in Oxford's 1584 letter to Burghley and Shakespeare's Sonnet 121, Professor Stoll finds only the Biblical reference worthy of comment. In one particular, I am glad to acknowledge his correction. The phrase *I am that I am* does appear in the Geneva Bible of 1560. Dr. Stoll states very positively that Shakespeare read it there. I will agree that the author of Sonnet 121 may have done so. Arguing backwards —as all Stratfordians do—from the works to their creator—that would be the natural assumption. But there is not one scintilla of personal evidence to show that Will Shakespere of Stratford ever owned or read a Geneva Bible and nobody knows this better than Professor Stoll himself. On the other hand, if he will turn to page 33 of Ward's "The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford," he will find this transcription from a record of Lord Oxford's expenditure during 1569 and 70:

> To William Seres, stationer, for a Geneva Bible, gilt, a Chaucer, Plutarch's works in French, with other books and papers. . . . . 2. 7. 10.

Here in one entry we have three books mentioned as the personal property of the literary Earl, each one of which is "known" by Stratfordians to have been "read by Shakespeare." Yet no record exists to show that any book of any type was ever owned by the Stratford man.

Parallels in word imagery between Oxford's writings and Shakespeare's mean little or nothing, says Professor Stoll. By the same token, I suppose, similiarities in design, color-treatment or brushstrokes count for nothing in identifying a painter's works. Textual affinities are certainly of paramount importance in tracing questionable literary identities. What, may I ask, *is* literature if not text? Lord Oxford's letters and other writings are studied with Shakespearean ideas expressed in the distinctive phraseology that sets Shakespeare's work apart. To present Kyd, Spenser, Lyly, and others as definite originators from whom Shakespeare "borrowed" is no real answer, because it can be shown that Oxford was using the Shakespearean imagery and word-patterns years before any of these men came to the fore.

If the proponents of orthodoxy could show us one— only one—letter or other personal document from the hand of the rustic Will containing a single Shakespearean phrase, no question of his responsibility for the creation of the poems and plays would ever have been raised.

CHARLES WISNER BARRELL.

New York City.

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Spain

BY W. H. AUDEN

YESTERDAY all the past. The language of size
Spreading to China along the trade-routes; the diffusion
Of the counting-frame and the cromlech;
Yesterday the shadow-reckoning in the sunny climates.

Yesterday the assessment of insurance by cards,
The divination of water; yesterday the invention
Of cartwheels and clocks, the taming of
Horses. Yesterday the bustling world of the navigators.

Yesterday the abolition of fairies and giants,
The fortress like a motionless eagle eyeing the valley,
The chapel built in the forest;
Yesterday the carving of angels and alarming gargoyles.

The trial of heretics among the columns of stone;
Yesterday the theological feuds in the taverns
And the miraculous cure at the fountain;
Yesterday the Sabbath of witches; but today the struggle.

Yesterday the installation of dynamos and turbines,
The construction of railways in the colonial desert;
Yesterday the classic lecture
On the origin of Mankind. But today the struggle.

Yesterday the belief in the absolute value of Greece,
The fall of the curtain upon the death of a hero;
Yesterday the prayer to the sunset
And the adoration of madmen. But today the struggle.

As the poet whispers, startled among the pines,
Or where the loose waterfall sings compact, or upright
On the crag by the leaning tower:
"O my vision. O send me the luck of the sailor."

And the investigator peers through his instruments
At the inhuman provinces, the virile bacillus
Or enormous Jupiter finished:
"But the lives of my friends. I inquire, I inquire."

And the poor in their fireless lodgings, dropping the sheets
Of the evening paper: "Our day is our loss, O show us
History the operator, the
Organizer, Time the refreshing river."

And the nations combine each cry, involving the life
That shapes the individual belly and orders
The private nocturnal terror:
"Did you not found the city state of the sponge,

Raise the vast military empires of the shark
And the tiger, establish the robin's plucky canton?
Intervene. O descend as a dove or
A furious papa or a mild engineer, but descend."

And the life, if it answers at all, replies from the heart
And the eyes and the lungs, from the shops and the squares
of the city:
"O no, I am not the mover;
Not today, not to you. To you, I'm the

Yes-man, the bar-companion, the easily-duped;
I am whatever you do. I am your vow to be
Good, your humorous story.
I am your business voice. I am your marriage.

What's your proposal? To build the just city? I will.
I agree. Or is it the suicide pact, the romantic
Death? Very well, I accept, for
I am your choice, your decision. Yes, I am Spain."

Many have heard it on remote peninsulas,
On sleepy plains, in the aberrant fisherman's islands
Or the corrupt heart of the city,
Have heard and migrated like gulls or the seeds of a flower.

They clung like birds to the long expresses that lurch
Through the unjust lands, through the night, through the alpine
tunnel;
They floated over the oceans;
They walked the passes. All presented their lives.

On that arid square, that fragment nipped off from hot
Africa, soldered so crudely to inventive Europe;
On that tableland seared by rivers,
Our thoughts have bodies; the menacing shapes of our fever

Are precise and alive. For the fears which made us respond
To the medicine ad and the brochure of winter cruises
Have become invading battalions;
And our faces, the institute face, the chain-store, the ruin

Are projecting their greed as the firing squad and the bomb.
Madrid is the heart. Our moments of tenderness blossom
As the ambulance and the sandbag;
Our home of friendship into a people's army.

Tomorrow, perhaps the future. The research on fatigue
And the movements of packers; the gradual exploring of all the
Octaves of radiation;
Tomorrow the enlarging of consciousness by diet and breathing.

Tomorrow the rediscovery of romantic love,
The photographing of ravens; all the fun under
Liberty's masterful shadow;
Tomorrow the hour of the pageant-master and the musician,

The beautiful roar of the chorus under the dome;
Tomorrow the exchanging of tips on the breeding of terriers,
The eager election of chairmen
By the sudden forest of hands. But today the struggle.

Tomorrow. For the young the poets exploding like bombs,
The walks by the lake, the weeks of perfect communion;
Tomorrow the bicycle races
Through the suburbs on summer evenings. But today the
struggle,

Today the deliberate increase in the chances of death,
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder;
Today the expending of powers
On the flat ephemeral pamphlet and the boring meeting.

Today the makeshift consolations: the shared cigarette,
The cards in the candlelit barn, and the scraping concert,
The masculine jokes; today the
Fumbled and unsatisfactory embrace before hurting.

The stars are dead. The animals will not look.
We are left alone with our day, and the time is short, and
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help nor pardon.

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Soviet Summary

THE SOVIETS. By Albert Rhys Williams. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by SAMUEL H. CROSS

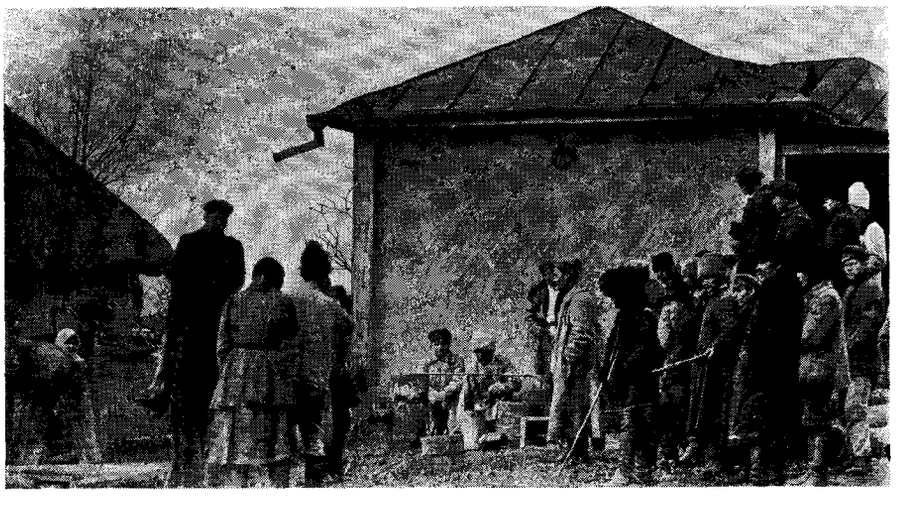
LITERATURE on the Soviets, both controversial and descriptive, continues to grow by leaps and bounds, to the despair of the specialist and, I suspect, to the exasperation of the reading public. Mr. Williams's latest effort is considerably more ambitious than anything off the presses since the Webbs' imposing opus, and is a serious work of importance in the field. The author has set out to compose something in the nature of a reference encyclopedia divided under headings phrased as questions which the curious are likely to ask about the Soviet Union. Frequently seasoned with anecdotes drawn from Mr. Williams's own lengthy experience in Russia, the book has a breeziness which disguises the solid substructure of factual material. The basic information may be rapidly scanned in large print, but the curious will find additional detail in the sections of smaller type which supplement each major division of the text.

Mr. Williams gathers his data under the four chief headings of state administration, economic life, social life, and foreign affairs. His treatment of the complex ethnic situation in Soviet territory and of Soviet policy toward the non-Slavic minorities is a praiseworthy exposition both of an essential Russian problem and of the ingenious methods adopted for its solution. The carrying of culture to racial and linguistic groups which before the revolution were absolutely cut off from modern civilization is, in fact, a missionary experiment of intense social interest and a Soviet achievement which merits the widest recognition. Mr. Williams explains clearly and accurately the function of the Communist International in relation to the Soviet State, and his discussions both of the role and significance of Lenin and of the position of Joseph Stalin as mouthpiece and leader are judicious and informing. Though he embodies the provisions of the Constitution of 1936 in his description of the Soviet administrative machinery, I have a notion that his readers would have been better served by a more detailed analysis of this instrument as compared with the essence of our own fundamental law.

While giving the Soviets every break, Mr. Williams makes no attempt to conceal the negative aspects of government, transportation, and farm and factory management. Endemic bureaucracy receives its usual panning, but to blame it, as Mr. Williams does, mainly on functionaires inherited from the old régime and on sabotage simply disguises the real causes: the buck-passing inherent in any large organization where the penalties for even innocent minor mistakes are severe and an almost superstitious reverence for non-essential paper-work. Mr. Williams is also inclined to underestimate the reconstruction problems of Soviet railroading. On the other hand, his chapters on the relations of the sexes and cultural life do the subjects ample justice.

The least satisfactory portion of this compendium is the section on Soviet foreign relations, which suffers from excessive simplification and occasional false emphasis. No competent observer questions the motives behind the Russian will for peace, and Mr. Williams's statement of the defensive and educative function of the Red Army is meaty and suggestive. At the same time, his analysis of the factors making for a Soviet victory in the next war adroitly combines facts and divination. In dealing with Soviet-American relations, he makes no more than cursory reference to the debt problem or to the connection of Article 2 of the Rapallo treaty with its adjustment. In his treatment of international affairs, Mr. Williams assumes the arts of the pamphleteer to the detriment of an otherwise valuable summary of the ideals, operation, and attainments of the Soviet Union.

Samuel H. Cross is associate professor of Slavic languages and literature at Harvard University.



A MOONSHINE STILL RAIDED BY THE SOVIET MILITIA

World of Certainties

THE WIND FROM THE MOUNTAINS. By Trygve Gulbranssen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by PHILLIPS D. CARLETON

MR. GULBRANSSEN'S new novel, though complete in itself, is a sequel to "Beyond Sing the Woods" and carries to old age the characters there introduced to the reader. It is not so successful a book. "Beyond Sing the Woods" was a romantic tale with all the simple stern opposites, the shadows and white light, and the rising action that any good narrative demands. The old legends of the countryside, the wicked heiress of the baronial estate, the proud and ruined Major, the struggle in the heart of the hero between the savage doctrines of pagan revenge and Christian forgiveness, all lent a glamour and a surge to the earlier story that this new novel does not possess. Here the years are long; the problems more complicated; and the manner of telling much more episodic. Yet this novel is laid in a world of the past where there were definite certainties of conduct and ethics, and the reader will find in these certainties much of the same charm that the earlier book held for him.

Adelaide, daughter of the retired and poverty-stricken Major, marries the son of a great estate owner in the deep wooded country and begins a strange new life in a household ruled by tradition and the Elder Dag, her father-in-law. The Elder Dag came of a fierce old stock that long ago had settled in this valley and made its people their tributaries. The earlier book told of his struggles to maintain himself against the baronial family south of him, his struggle to deal justly with his people and yet be merciful with his great power to support or destroy. Now he is an old man gentled by the years, a kind of deus ex machina watching over the happiness of his son and daughter-in-law. The story tells of the strife of the younger pair toward happiness and understanding. It is a strife not sharply plotted to a definite conclusion, but uncertain and fluid. The figures approach and part and gain painfully in understanding, watched over by the Elder Dag who offers now and again a solution or a sign of confidence and trust. The story is told in a series of short pictures that sketch out the years but that interlock none too well.

This novel carries a nostalgia for the past where the conduct of life had at least hard, firm ideals for its guide. It is philosophical by implication, ethical in its intent, and the ethics are those of Christianity. The author has suspended his book somewhere between the world of legend and the hard world of fact; he has ruled out the irritants of daily living, cast his characters in a heroic mould, and boldly decided for the mild virtues of Christianity.

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Life in the Dustbowl

THE TREE FALLS SOUTH. By Wellington Roe. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

MORE pertinent as a document than as fiction, Mr. Roe's book belongs to that school of hopelessness which leads many to be hopeful of the future of American letters. It is a study of the dustbowl area during the depression. As such it depicts with literalness the effect of the continued drought on the nerves of the farmers, from which point it continues by showing how the political and financial corruption of a small Kansas town, linked as that corruption is with the state machine, lead to an agrarian riot which Mr. Roe really gets up for the purpose of suppressing it through the American Legion. While Adam Potter is down at Topeka fruitlessly trying to see the governor, his wife is gored by a bull which his small son has thoughtlessly released from its pen. Returned from Topeka, Adam is shot in the riot. The children are turned over to the state orphan asylum. At the end of the tale the rain falls, but not before Mr. Roe has revealed at long length the futility of human action.

Undoubtedly all these events happened to somebody at some time or another. The language of the characters is a veracious transcript of actual speech. I have no doubt that the author can cite chapter and verse for every episode, every cuss-word in the tale. But Charles Reade, whose novels have not survived, could also cite chapter and verse for every episode in his fiction, and met all adverse criticism by an appeal to his enormous file of newspaper clippings. Like Charles Reade, Mr. Roe fails to observe the ancient Aristotelian axiom that what is possible is not necessarily probable.

Mr. Roe's difficulty is that of a good many contemporary novelists. Equipped with a fine reportorial faculty, he does not know what to do with it. He is so determined to arouse sympathy for the hard lot of the Kansas farmer that he continually underlines all he writes and fails to create that mysterious translation of life into fiction which makes the life of literature in place of the life of sociology. He hunts his characters down. The injury of Mrs. Potter is a purely gratuitous piece of misfortune. The governor is permitted to remain in ignorance of the farmers' visit because Mr. Roe can thus add another count to the indictment. Adam Potter is shot, not by the sheriff, but by the author.

WELLINGTON ROE

The dustjacket observes that "when you have closed the book, finished reading, you will not have left its characters. The impact of the climax will send them with you for days as you go about your daily tasks." Even allowing for the passionate lyric cry which is permitted to dustjackets, the difficulty is that this is precisely what does not happen. What remains is an apprehension of the sociological truth that the lot of farmers in western Kansas is a hard one. What does not remain is any feeling that Adam Potter, his family, the sheriff, the banker (our old friend who forecloses the mortgage on the farm), and the rest are anything more than representative sociological types of what might conceivably be true if you piled all rural misery into one book. But rural miseries do not make fiction, they make only a case study, and a case study the volume obstinately remains.

Balaclava Twice a Day

CONTACT. By Charles Codman. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by KENNETH P. LITTAUER

THESE are the best and the worst of the war memories of Charles Codman, once a pilot with the 96th Aero Squadron, U. S. A.

To be a survivor of the 96th is necessarily ample matter for a book. This is because the 96th was something altogether exceptional in the way of American flying units. It was the first of our day bombardment units, the pioneer, the spearhead, and the number-one martyr of a new offensive technique. Not merely once in its history, but twice a day, weather permitting, it performed exploits roughly comparable to the charge of the Light Brigade. Any part of its story is the stuff of legend, and deserves an audience. Codman was one of the first muster of thirty-six fliers, pilots, and observers, who went to the front, east of Verdun, with the 96th, early in the summer of 1918. The first combat flight took off from Amanty on June 12th. Within six weeks from that first sortie, half the original complement of fliers was either dead, wounded, or captured. Codman explains how it all happened with illustrative vignettes of disaster.

CHARLES CODMAN

September 16th. Codman and two companions are talking at noon mess. A pilot named Anderson speaks: " 'Do you remember flying up from Clermont? Besides Evans, we are the only ones left. It won't be long now.' "

Just four remaining, out of the original thirty-six. "Not, not the Six Hundred!"

Before dinner that evening Anderson died the characteristic death of the Christian martyrs and the fliers of the 96th. His observer burned with him, of course. And two other pilots, and two other observers. It was Codman's last flight too. But he came through it alive, and spent the rest of the war in German prisons.

The days of his captivity follow, beginning with the crash of a ravaged Breguet bomber in a field near Conflans, and ending with the end of the war and repatriation. This is not the least exciting half of the book. For, though the imminence of death is left behind, there are other vehicles of suspense—hunger, cold, intimidation, uncertainty, the indignity of filth, the torment of hostile inquisition, the stifling misery of claustrophobia.

In the antique Castle of Landshut the captive's wanderings ended. At Landshut he encountered James Norman Hall, the perfect companion for desert isle or donjon keep. Codman fell at once under the strong fascination of Hall's extraordinary serenity; and his prison restlessness appears henceforth to have been appeased.

Books of war memories are always in peril of seeming vainglorious. This one avoids the danger by disregarding it. Though the author never asserts his merit, neither does he emphasize it by furtive disclaimers. The book is throughout the uncompromising expression of a man of decent pride, but of modest address. Its manifest purpose is to preserve and make available the record of those things that Codman saw, during certain high moments of his life, which still seem to him, after twenty years, dramatically memorable and socially significant. He thrusts no comments upon the reader but sticks to the job of writing a record. So much restraint is a mark of singularity and a recommendation.

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The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Translations from the Chinese

Another Year to Wait

WHILE the Old Mandarin
Was trying to make up his mind
How to describe a dogwood flower
The dogwood season was over.

A Lesson

The path was strewn, one day last winter
With curly shards of clear ice,
Broken tubes of frozen rain
Blown from the trees.
I wanted to go out and study them again
To see exactly what they looked like,
But I didn't.
I try to teach myself,
We are given only one chance to see things.
We can't always go back for another look.

Massachusetts Modesty

My favorite inscription lately
Is what I saw blazoned
On the back of a grocery truck in New London:—
DON'T COME TOO CLOSE
MAYONNAISE IS DRESSING.

Hint for Haberdashers

Reproached for wearing a fringy collar,
The Old Mandarin explained:
I would buy new shirts much oftener
If it weren't such a bore
Taking out all the pins.

Grammarian's Funeral

The more I study the English language
(Said the perplexed old scholiast)
The more disturbed I get.
I learn from Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*
That John Godfrey Saxe wrote
"This too will pass away"
And so did Warren Hastings, Nathaniel Hawthorne,
T. B. Aldrich, and Lanta Wilson Smith.
But, per contra, Paul Hamilton Hayne,
Theodore Tilton, Ella Wheeler Wilcox
And James Sexton Holme
All said
"This too *shall* pass away."
What will or shall I do?

Literature Seminar

Pope was the wittiest poet in English
And the way to memorize his dates
Is to remember that he was always
A master of couplets—
1688-1744.

Word Study

The lover of geography
Found in Connecticut, near Kent Falls,
A pretty stream called Yuza Mini.
But he has so often been fooled
By funny spellings for the sake of trade
That he doesn't know if this is old Indian lingo
Or a nickname given by a girl on a picnic
Who lost her temper.

But Not to a Coronation

An appropriate book
To take on a picnic
Would be Browning's *Asolando*
Whose title means
Being out in the sunshine.

Too Many Beans?

The philoprogenitive Oriental
Wondered what's wrong in Dalton, Mass.,
Where a big sign warns

CROSS
CHILDREN
HERE

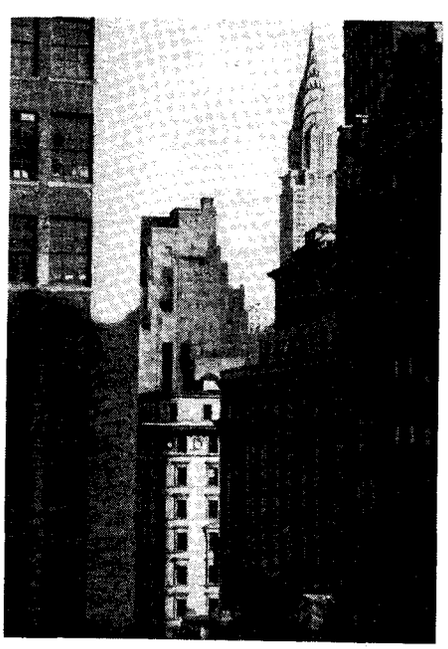
In a Bookshop

I feel a glutinous reluctance
To read anything Worth While.
I do not wish to exert—or squander—
My precious little stock
Of hard-earned sensibility,
Or grieve my tenderness
With someone else's agitations.
No! I need to be amused:
Give me a detective story.

Syllabub

I've had a lot of letters about syllabub (B. G. April 17). Most correspondents affirm that it is still found mostly in the South, but W. R. (Minnesota) says Carl Carmer quotes a Shaker recipe for it in New York State. There is divergence of opinion as to whether it should be cold or lukewarm. M. M. H. (North Carolina) says "I can remember helping to wield the beater on the freezing north porch to keep the cream cold." E. R. W. (Pennsylvania) says it is still listed in Miss Colquitt's *Savannah Cook Book*. D. O. (raised in Georgia) says "When I was a child we had a *syllabub churn*. It is made of cream, whites of eggs, confectioner's sugar, and white wine. It is still my favorite dessert." E. M. S. (Chicago) says:—

"They had to have a supply of milch cows for syllabub because the proper way to make this drink was to milk the cow into the dish and so get the proper foam. That also, of course, settles the question of temperature as the pleasant lukewarmness furnished by the cow. My impression is that the phrase in English poetry, Elizabethan, perhaps, is to 'stroke a syllabub', referring to the milking process."



VIEW FROM B. G. OFFICE
Photo by Samuel Kravitt.

Equally Dangerous?

SIR:—Curiosity's passionate henchman, Robert Ripley, who ransacks a continent to verify a single fact for his BELIEVE IT OR NOT books, has discovered that *printing presses print faster than machine guns can shoot*. The Browning Machine Gun can produce 31,000 shots an hour . . . a modern printing press turns out 60,000 newspaper copies an hour. . . . Isn't there a sign or portent here for the Old Mandarin?

M. L. S.

The Old Mandarin isn't quite sure whether this information is offered in praise of the newspaper or in apprehension? He dislikes having either weapon pointed directly at him.

What does Mr. Eric Partridge mean in his *Dictionary of Slang* by speaking of *Bessie Cotter* (1935) as "an American classic"? It was issued very quietly here, noticed by few, and withdrawn after its prosecution in England. How can a book so recent and so little known be called a classic?

The most amusing spot, to me, in Partridge's fruitful work, was finding the name of one valiant lady among the list of over sixty male contributors who had helped Mr. Partridge with choice tidbits of modern vulgate. That is an honor worth record, and I'd like to write a verse of tribute. Salute to "Mrs. J. Litchfield."

Locomotive Department

SIR:—As a boy, I was lucky enough to get frequent rides in the cab of the rocky 2-4-0 that hauled its one baggage-coach combine on the old Delaware Valley, a thirteen mile run between Bushkill and Stroudsburg, Pa.

The great thrill on any trip from Bush-

(*Continued on page* 15)

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The Threatening Thirties

(*Continued from page 4*)

The syncopaters, however, must be mentioned. I refer to the writers who react to the growing nervousness which is so characteristic of our period and which is of course a symptom of mental unrest. The peasant is not nervous because he expects nothing new. The perfectly civilized man will not be nervous because he will be prepared for any contingency. But our unbalanced culture has been nervous for at least a quarter of a century. The syncopaters play up to this. They are aware that the taste for excitement grows by what it feeds upon. Crudely they satisfy it by sensational news in the cheap newspapers; more subtly by rhetorical devices designed to increase the tempo of the emotions as one sees in the magazine *Time*, or in the typical Broadway play, or in the narrative sections of the most successful movies. The analogy with accelerated dance rhythm is exact, and the reasons and the results are also the same. The makers of this new speed of the sensations are not themselves afraid; yet they are certainly responding to a nervous sensation in the public which is one of the many varieties of fear in an unstable world, where no two days are alike and there is no confidence except in the sensations of the moment. Although these writers probably quicken the intelligence of the masses by their devices, their opportunity to do so comes from the need to be quickened of uncertain men and women. When a nation is restless, uneasy, the emotional pressure must be increased if there is to be a reaction beyond routine experience. Observe the violent language of European diplomatic propaganda, unprecedented in the last century. And thus it is not difficult to relate the jazz intellect of the twenties and thirties to a deep-lying fear of being left behind in a race toward an uncertain future. That there are other causes for this state of mind I, of course, do not deny.

I have left to the last the most obvious instance of all and, fortunately, the most encouraging for those who, like myself, believe that America is on the way, if not up, certainly not down. I cannot say that I am so optimistic as regards the rest of the world, but nothing said heretofore is to be interpreted as a prophecy on my part that this world is going to the dogs. Man is a tough animal. He will digest his machines before they destroy him.

The debunkers in history, biography, and social affairs are perhaps the best index we have of the new American state of mind. It is well known that substantially every great American has had his biography rewritten, and every important American period its history retold in the last twenty years, usually for the worse, and certainly the worse for the subject. The typical American history in these decades has been satiric, disillusioned, and contradictory of what had been written before. This debunking process was perfectly normal. Such a rewriting of history always follows any strong dissatisfaction with the present, or distrust of the future, for the disillusioned man is sure to turn bitterly upon his past, unless he is a romantic, in which case he will sentimentalize it. Sir Walter Scott, taking British history for his past, did the latter. But our writers are clearly suspicious that some of their own ills are due to overconfidence, and others to the dead hand of the past laid upon institutions needing change. Thus their reactions have been critical rather than romantic. They set out to debunk all reputations beginning with the greatest. Fear for the present led them to abuse the past, often on very unsound evidence.

But it is most interesting to note that we are rapidly coming out of the debunking era. Debunking books are now being savagely attacked for inaccuracy and overstatement. The new mood is realism rather than satire. The best history and the best biography of the last two or three years have been definitely constructive rather than destructive. The historians, having cleared their minds of illusions, seem willing to study fearlessly the probable results of rapid and inevitable change. They are distinctly less jittery than the novelists, the dramatists, and the poets.

Even as much evidence as I have assembled here, since it is drawn from widely read books, would seem to indicate that *a* ruling passion, if not *the* ruling passion, of the thirties, is fear of change. And it is much more impressive evidence than the endless series of specialized books in economics, government, social philosophy, and the physics and psychology of modern war, which deal *directly* with the dangers of a world in which industrialization has run ahead of ethical control. These are positive signs of the attempts of Western civilization to cure itself of the diseases of undirected progress. Literature on the contrary, and I have been talking specifically of literature, reflects the troubled imagination, with its fears, its suspicions, its strong desires. It is closer to what men are actually feeling than carefully reasoned discourses on how to save the state. Yet, of course, these books by scholars, scientists, and social experts also indicate a worried society unusually afraid that one false step will plunge us into a disaster worse than 1914 or an economic anarchy more devastating than 1929.

A comparison will make the dominance of this new distrust of civilization more apparent. Thoreau, who was beginning to write in the thirties of the last century, was also skeptical of the blessings of uncontrolled industrialism, and thoroughly aware that a capitalist society based upon exploitation was ultimately destructive of individual happiness. His life work was an attempt to redefine for his contemporaries the word "success." In this he was as modern as Trotsky or H. G. Wells, yet note that his dominant idea, his ruling passion, was different from ours. An idea of ethical progress, which is almost foreign to our imagination, obsessed him as much as skepticism of any progress except in machines and the utilities of living seems to dominate us. He never doubts that everyone can be made better morally and spiritually, and essentially wants to be made better. He believes sincerely, as I have said elsewhere, in Tennyson's belief—"We needs must love the highest if we see it."

We do not. We know that the modern man will always desire a better automobile, a better radio, and a better machine gun. We doubt whether he is capable of actively desiring a better life, and this makes us afraid.

Is Western civilization really crumbling then? There is no direct answer in literature. That part of literature which prophesies — poetry, tragedy, philosophy — is quiescent now. It is descriptive, analytical, psychological literature in fiction, drama, and article, which is most active. But a novel, even a novel by such a social philosopher as H. G. Wells or Aldous Huxley or Sinclair Lewis, sums up only the present and the immediate past. One has to go deeper into the imagination than they do to throw light on the future. For the future is always unexpected and only the loftiest imagination forecasts the lines of its emotional thinking.

Yet there are indirect answers. Use might be made in a diagnosis of Jules Romains in France and Thomas Mann, now writing in Switzerland, but if I were using literature as a guide to what may happen next I should find more significance in the extraordinary energy of one national literature—our own. American literature is not only very prolific, it is also vigorous to the point of crudity, unexpected in its great variety of new kinds of books, and as free from conventional restraint as it is uneven in quality and execution. Already the Americans of this generation are being imitated abroad.

Now literary energy is like scientific energy—it may lead down as easily as up. As science has made war both more probable and more horrible, so energy can vulgarize literature, has vulgarized large areas in this country, as readily as it can produce masterpieces. But energy itself is likely to survive the calamities it may meet on the road. I suspect that a literary psychoanalyst would find in American literature not only a consciousness of the general fear of the Western world, but also a power which may overcome it. We are continent-conscious, like the Russians, with the confidence which comes from a home of our own which can take care of us all. This confidence tempers our consciousness that the civilization we have brought here is shaky. Yet even the most confident American writing—columnists' satire, musical comedy, movie scripts, *New Yorker* editorials, has the note of fear of change—the implied *if*. Spengler was right.

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The Bowling Green

(*Continued from page* 13)

kill to Stroudsburg came when the Delaware Valley single line express crept out on the main line of the D. L. & W. in East Stroudsburg. It was like leaving a country lane in a buggy and venturing out on a four-lane super speedway, only worse. I firmly believe that in spite of any signals, the old engineer, "Slim," figured his little engine was on the verge of getting "smeared" by one of those gorgeous D. L. & W. twin-giant combinations that came roaring down the mountain from Pocono Summit. Boy, those engines were handsome! Even in 1919 they had the streamline effect from their all-copper exterior piping that always gave them a warrior-like glitter.

The "Devil's Victory" we always called the line—never the "Delaware Valley." Each summer evening we used to gather on the green between the Hollyhock Tea House and the Post Office to wait the arrival of the "D. V." with the mail at five-thirty. One summer we had a croquet set there and all the kids in the village played while waiting for the mail. As I remember it, the sweet smell of that hot old puffer when it finally arrived was far better than any other smell in the country even in the early evening quiet when fragrance seems closer and heavier.

Most of my summer dreams as a boy focused on the "D. V." The fondest of these grew out of the runs on the evenings before the Fourth of July and Labor Day when there were always a couple of extra coaches (big fellows borrowed from the D. L. & W.) to carry the visitors to the mountain camps. Nights after these great runs, I used to dream of seeing a giant twelve-car special, hauled by a tremendous locomotive, glide along the tracks which ran through our back field at the foot of Simon's Mountain.

I rode on the old line intermittently during the twenties, but the road had lost its old glory shortly after the war when the demand for black walnut, forested in the Pennsylvania hills for aeroplane propellors, ceased and mine ties found their way to the coal fields in trucks. About 1924 the old engine I knew was traded in on a second-hand 2-4-0 which came direct from the Susquehanna. The road's death knell rang in this move, for the name "Susquehanna" was never removed from the tender of the locomotive. At the end of two years this engine was run off the rails of a lumber siding and is today "pastured out" in a quiet pine elbow on the banks of the Little Bushkill Creek. A substitute gasoline engine maintained the franchise for a while, but the trucks with their infinite radii of mobility soon left the Delaware Valley Railroad a quiet overgrown reminder of a different day.

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We are pleased to announce that on and after May 22nd the books written by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

(UNDER THE IMPRINT OF DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY)

will be published by the J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

TWENTY YEARS AGO, in 1917, Doubleday, Page and Company announced a little romance about an itinerant bookseller, oddly entitled *Parnassus on Wheels.* The first advertisement of this book was written by the late F. N. Doubleday himself. "A Young Man Named Morley," he said, "has written a book . . . In the years to come you will hear more of this author."

That same year, a few weeks later, George H. Doran published *Songs for a Little House,* the first of several volumes of intimate verse, of which E. V. Lucas wrote that their refreshing simplicity has had no rival since Parson Herrick.

It would be ill-mannered to expatiate here on the growth and spread of Christopher Morley's work. "No other American writer," William Bolitho said "is more sure of being in print a hundred years hence." Certainly no living writer has done more to promote the honor of our trade. Mr. Morley has written books in many different tempos. He has always been, and we hope will always remain, a master of the unexpected. Those who know only the Morley of *Parnassus on Wheels,* of *Kathleen,* of the early essays, are surprised and puzzled by the Morley of *Human Being,* of *Toulemonde,* or of the *Chinese Mandarin.* May we mention a few high spots in the list:—

The Haunted Bookshop, in 1919, which has become a collector's classic . . . *Where the Blue Begins,* 1922, a "divine comedy" which appalled the Doubleday salesmen when they expected "another book about an old bookstore" . . . *Thunder on the Left* (1925) tragic and beautiful fantasy which remains one of the most subtly troubling of America's notable books . . . *John Mistletoe* (1931) a sort of memoir of what happens to a sensitive mind up to the age of forty. ("It will sell slowly and live long")...*Human Being* (1933) the unvarnished story of one of ourselves "without chemical preservative" The long series of

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Parnassus on Wheels
The Haunted Bookshop
Kathleen
Tales from a Rolltop Desk
Where the Blue Begins
Pandora Lifts the Lid (with Don Marquis)
Pleased to Meet You
The Arrow
Thunder on the Left
Human Being
Swiss Family Manhattan
I Know a Secret

ESSAYS
Shandygaff
Mince Pie
Pipefuls
Plum Pudding
Travels in Philadelphia
The Powder of Sympathy
Inward, Ho!
The Romany Stain
Off the Deep End
Shakespeare and Hawaii
Internal Revenue
Streamlines

POETRY
Songs for a Little House
The Rocking Horse
Hide and Seek
Chimneysmoke
Parsons' Pleasure
Translations from the Chinese
Mandarin in Manhattan

BIOGRAPHY
John Mistletoe

PLAYS
One-Act Plays

TRAVEL
Hasta La Vista

essay collections, from *Shandygaff* (1918) on through *Mince Pie, The Romany Stain, Off the Deep End, Internal Revenue,* etc., down to *Streamlines* (1936). These constitute, in deepening progression, an acute and humorous history of a whole era. This succession of a dozen volumes is surely unique in American literature.

Nor could we omit certain other vivacious phenomena: *Swiss Family Manhattan* for instance, which some have thought the most relentlessly amusing lampoon on American civilization . . . *Kathleen,* little classic of a farce which has sold constantly increasing for 17 years . . . *I Know a Secret,* written *con amore* for and about children . . . Or the collected *Poems* (including those extraordinary throw-backs into Elizabethan temperament) . . . the engaging *Translations from the Chinese* . . . the *One-Act Plays* . . . the lectures on *Shakespeare* . . . the *Travels in Philadelphia* . . .

But this is not a bibliography. (Dr. Alfred P. Lee does that, in a meticulous little book well-known to collectors, which now also joins our list.) We just wanted to announce, with appropriate pride, that, for his publishing ventures, Christopher Morley has come back to his native Philadelphia. To Doubleday, Doran and Company, who have for twenty years honored this author in the Trade, we express our fraternal compliment upon a large transaction accomplished with good feeling among all concerned.

Henceforward all orders or inquiries respecting Christopher Morley's books should be addressed to J. B. Lippincott Company. (Our New York Office, for Editorial and Sales Planning, is at 250 Park Avenue, in charge of Mr. Frank C. Henry. Telephone Plaza 3-0403). Several titles which have been unobtainable will be put back in print in attractive and uncostly new editions. Mr. Morley's coming novel, long delayed by pressure of other work, will be circumstantially announced later.

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The Compleat Collector

FINE PRINTING: CONDUCTED BY CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS

In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Rare Books and is conducted by John T. Winterich

Sandro and Simonetta

HEWLETT: QUATTROCENTISTERIA, OR HOW SANDRO BOTTICELLI SAW SIMONETTA IN THE SPRING. Golden Cross Press. 1937. *200 copies,* $20 *and* $40.

TO everyone there are certain books, read in one's own spring time, which the dead leaves of a thousand books have swirled about without burying, certain books which neither "wintry time nor vernal, nor days, nor things diurnal" can wither or make dim. Such a book is Maurice Hewlett's story of Sandro Botticelli and Simonetta Vespucci. Kin to Phryne, myriads of light-years distant from the untouchables of the strip-tease, the Venus of the Shell lives on in radiance in Hewlett's story. I read it first in those days when the little books from Mosher's press, before we learned to attitudinize in our printing, lent to many a recovered treasure the charm of simplicity and decorum. So much of that elegance has gone, to give place to a sprawling vulgarity which not even the vulgarians understand!

I open this new book with trepidation. Yet her "justifiable act of self-assertion" suffers no misunderstanding here. It is a spacious page on which the story is retold with the grace and easy amplitude of the Renaissance. The type is clear and comely, the proportions are right, the craftsmanship competent. Mr. Angelo, who has designed the form of the book, has added something valuable to it in the linear drawings and the initial letters, and then, to make the measure full, he has given it color—sparkling bits of blue and red and gold. It is an exquisite setting for Simonetta's story, one which Sandro might approve.

A Derrydale Decade

A DECADE OF AMERICAN SPORTING BOOKS AND PRINTS BY THE DERRYDALE PRESS. New York. 1937.

Mr. Eugene V. Connett III established the Derrydale Press in 1927 with the definite idea of publishing books on contemporary American Sport, hand-colored prints showing contemporary American sporting scenes, and reprints of rare, early American works on sport. The appeal was to a restricted clientèle, but a very definite and peculiar one. And the material resources for such books in the way of pictures, books on sport from an earlier day, and competent writers of today, which at first thought (to the non sportsman!) might seem slight indeed, proves by the lists of publications during the past ten years to have been anything but scanty. Between eighty and ninety books have been published (besides twenty-nine privately printed), and over seventy of the prints—a considerable record for a novel venture in a specialized field.

It is the fact that a special field has been chosen for the issues of the Derrydale Press that constitutes one of its most interesting features. Another is the fine way in which the work has been done. Without ostentation, the books have been excellent examples of book making. The present story is a case in point: it is a good looking book to begin with, but there are niceties of detail about it (such as the use of the finest of papers—Rives, from France, the ne plus ultra of papers) which show a discrimination rare in publishing. The Derrydale Books have been well bred—and if you stop to think how many mongrels there are in the book stores today you will better appreciate what Mr. Connett has done.

Game Fishes

MARINE GAME FISHES OF THE PACIFIC COAST. By L. A. Walford. University of California Press. 1937.

This is, according to the title-page, a "contribution from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History," and physically it is a quarto volume, bound in buckram, with gold stamping. In contents, it is an endeavor to publish a book which shall be of interest to anglers as well as to scientific students of game fish: how well the author has succeeded I do not know, but the book itself, as a piece of printing, seems to me to fall very gracefully into place between the frankly utilitarian handbook and the *edition de luxe*.

Of course the great feature of the volume is, and should be, the illustrations. There are some seventy plates, thirty-seven of them in color, and the remainder in collotype in one color. This is a somewhat lavish display, yet there is no better way to show the subjects.

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The contest closes September 15, 1937. The judges will be the editors of Harper's Magazine, who will also pay $250 each for non-prize-winning manuscripts suitable for publication in the magazine. Subject to the author's consent, the prize-winning manuscript will be published in book form by Harper & Brothers.

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JULY 18-JULY 31

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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THINK FAST, MR. MOTO *J. P. Marquand* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Dead-panned Nipponese secret-agent juggles deftly with death and saves family honor of wealthy white merchant.	Slick villainy in exotic high-class Hawaiian gambling hell, a turbulent romance, and Moto officiating with blood-chilling *politesse*.	Banzai!
ASK MISS MOTT *E. Phillips Oppenheim* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Hide-and-seek between pretty "advice to love-lorn" colyumist, her sleuth uncle, and two villains—one nice, t'other nasty.	Sadly punch-drunk series of melodramatic episodes, suavely written but minus probability, frequently absurd, and generally dull.	Dud
THE LAUGHING BUDDHA *Carl Glick* (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard: $2.)	Fat-bellied idols and sharp white arrows bring death to several and trouble to editor-narrator.	Mixture of mobsters, mysticism and murder; not quite enough of each to lift tenuous yarn into credibility.	Average

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The PHŒNIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I AM most interested to have arrive on my desk a biography of *Hart Crane*, subtitled "The Life of an American Poet," written by *Philip Horton* and brought out by W. W. Norton & Company. It will be reviewed by another hand in this publication, but I wish to say here that any of you to whom poetry is a chief interest, will find it worth your three dollars. If you have always admired Greek Drama, to say that the "Ion" of *Euripides* has now been translated with notes by "H. D.," who is the most exquisite of American women poets, is to guarantee beautiful work. In this connection, *Louis MacNeice*, one of the most promising of the younger English poets, has translated the "Agamemnon" of *Aeschylus*. The Euripides is published by Houghton Mifflin and the Aeschylus by Harcourt, Brace.

The following letter is of especial interest concerning the late *Edwin Arlington Robinson:*

> I don't know whether or not you plan to mention the new "Collected Poems" of E. A. Robinson which just came out, but you probably will be interested to know that on page 1312 the line—"So Fargo slept again, and had a dream." is added. The lines—"And had no longer a dim will to die, Or to get up"—which appeared in the first appearance of "Amaranth" in 1934 are omitted in the new collected edition of Robinson's poems. E. A. made the changes in my copy in October 1934. While visiting Robinson in October 1934 I happened to tell him that Professor Bliss Perry was not sure whether or not Fargo had a nightmare. Apparently a good many readers of the poem were somewhat confused. As a result Robinson had written the publishers asking them to make the change. Had I not accidentally mentioned the Professor Perry incident I might not have known of the proposed change and would not have been fortunate to have a rather unique copy of "Amaranth." I doubt if E. A. made the correction in more than a very few copies, if any.
>
> Howard G. Schmitt.

The fact that the new line is added actually makes the 1937 "Collected Poems" a first edition.

I liked Lawrence Lee's "Summer Goes On." I said then that he took his place among the best artists of the South. Now appears "Monticello and Other Poems," (Scribner's: $2), dedicated to John Hall Wheelock. By the poetry and the dedication you will perceive why Mr. Lee will not be particularly *persona grata* to the youngest generation. The poet invokes the spirit of Jefferson for our perplexed epoch, viewing the house daily where he lived and died. It is a poem of grief and pride and remains, as it were, in suspense. Much as Mr. Coffin, with more color, paints New England landscape, Mr. Lee does the same for the South: "The Power of Darkness," "In Residence, Fifteenth Street," "The Hour for Lamps," etc. But it seems to me that his best work is in several sonnets—burningly sincere—in a group called "The Minute" and in the two narratives under "Night Journey." These poems leave a strong impression; and there is something about the work of Mr. Lee, simple as it is in technique, that distinguishes it from that of most of his contemporaries.

I feel guilty about not having reviewed two books by younger women poets. They are "Homer's Golden Chain," by *Virginia Moore*, and "Traveler of Earth," by *Louise Burton Laidlaw*. Miss Moore is, of course, the more experienced writer of the two. Her book (E. P. Dutton: $1.50) opens with a long and intimate prose dedication. Miss Moore has, to me, an interesting mind; but somehow I usually feel that she is not quite bringing off a singularly good idea. She fumbles words—not always, certainly, but just often enough to make one sorry, since the rest of the poem is so good. Her attitude is righter than that of most women poets. She is not soft and flabby. She can do something brief and well-wrought of words, as in "Advice Spoken Softly." And then in the very next poem she can say something about "a fluid virtuous" driving "its oriflamme," which means precisely nothing and is very awkward to boot. Perhaps "Trust Left a Dead Woman" is the best poem here. It is eerie yet definite.

Miss Laidlaw, in her "Traveler of Earth" (Dodd, Mead: $2) takes her text from Plato's "Phaedrus." "I divided each soul into three parts, two of them having the forms of horses and the third that of a charioteer." She is not so good a technician as Miss Moore. Her use of the word "braggadocio" is just as bad as Miss Moore's use of "oriflamme." Yet, somehow, the two words seem to characterize the two women. Miss Moore really does carry an oriflamme, or red silk banderole, in her poetry, though she seems not to know what the word means; and Miss Laidlaw has a sort of braggadocio that is young and attractive. She has not learned to prune her work of stale words and phrases and rhymes. What she says is fervent and good and noble—but it is the *way* it is said that makes such a difference in poetry. I know I should like Miss Laidlaw as a person. I think she still has a good deal to learn as a poet.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 164)

DONNE—"AN ANATOMY OF THE WORLD."

There is no health; physicians say that we
At best enjoy but a neutrality;
. . . Mankind decays so soon
We are scarce our fathers' shadows cast at noon;
Only death adds t' our length, nor are we grown
In stature to be men till we are none.

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Early reviews already promise as wide critical acclaim for *The Joppa Door* as Mrs. Sykes received on *Second Hoeing*. The Saturday Review describes the novel as "understanding and sympathetic. . . . A book which any reader will find curiously moving." Charles Hanson Towne writes in the N. Y. American: "Told in the most primitive English, which lends remarkable verity to the tale. The simplicity of it will move the reader."

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

AMERICAN FICTION SERIES. Edited by Harry Hayden Clark. American Book Company, 1937. "Modern Chivalry," Hugh Henry Brackenridge. $3. "The Yemassee," William Gilmore Simms. $2.40. "Ormond," Charles Brockden Brown. $2.10. "Horse-Shoe Robinson," John Pendleton Kennedy. $2.40. "Satanstoe," James Fenimore Cooper. $2.40.

This series promises to be of very great use and constant interest. There is a surprising number of novels in our early American literature of real merit, either because of their historical and social value or their real interest as fiction, or both. Such books are frequently inaccessible except in great libraries, and unpurchasable except from dealers in rare books. Even when reprinted, the editions have been small and examples can be found only with some difficulty. Professor Clark, the general editor of these new reprints, has begun his series with five books, two of which at least are famous or ought to be. He has had Claude M. Newlin edit Hugh Henry Brackenridge's "Modern Chivalry," a novel of 1792 which many think gives the best picture of American life in the young South to be found anywhere, and one of the best semi-satiric studies of a still primitive democracy. Alexander Cowie has edited William Gilmore Simms's "The Yemassee," certainly the best nineteenth century Indian story outside of Cooper, and in its humorous minor characters rather better than Cooper at his best. Here is a book that should be added to the collateral reading of our schools. The third volume in the series is "Ormond," by Charles Brockden Brown, edited by Ernest Marchand. Brown, the Gothic novelist of America and often called our first professional man of letters, keeps tight hold, beneath his bombast and rather plushy extravaganza, upon an exciting narrative, run off against real backgrounds. A fourth in the series is "Horse-Shoe Robinson," by John Pendleton Kennedy, edited by Ernest E. Leisey, a historical novel of the Delaware Peninsula. And a fifth is Cooper's little read "Satanstoe," edited by Robert E. Spiller.

We may hope to have in authentic and readable form in these reprints a library of early American fiction which as it grows will be seen to contain much more that is worthy of note by the American reader than would be generally suspected. The enterprise is an excellent one and should be continued with rapidity and success.

H. S. C.

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Fiction

MINE IS THE KINGDOM. By Jane Oliver. Lippincott. 1937. $2.50.

Though among the few Stuarts to have a consistently successful life, James the First seems today almost the least attractive of the breed. Yet his career should represent an exhilarating upward curve, ranging as it does from his years as infant prisoner of the rebellious Lords who had driven out his mother Mary Queen of Scots, to the day when as Elizabeth's successor he became first monarch of the United Kingdom. Not only luck, but patience and ability played their parts in this rise, and Miss Oliver does her best to render her protagonist understandable and sympathetic. A plaything of the unruly nobility at first, he soon learned their game and added his own wily caution to their treachery. His apprenticeship in the kingly art of betrayal makes a complex and somewhat depressing story, perhaps better suited to biography than to the form in which the author tells it. The lack of a strong romantic motive also weakens this narrative of the first forty years of his life, since his early love for Anne of Denmark soon died, leaving power alone to occupy his mind in later years.

Under the circumstances it is surprising to find how much Miss Oliver is able to make of it all—and this without abandoning the conventions of the historical novel. She may render them less grandiloquent in language and less melodramatic in action, but otherwise they are much as they were in Scott's day. Small boys, for instance, still stray into Holyrood House at night, and hear a scream: the murder of Rizzio is taking place. Within these limitations of subject and manner, Miss Oliver has written a sound and excellent book.

T. P., Jr.

PEOPLE IN CAGES. By Helen Ashton. Macmillan. 1937. $2.50.

This is a very snug and tailor-made story dedicated to the proposition that life is a zoo and all of us are in our cages. Of course life never yields to any such pat formula, and although the novel is more malleable it can assume any design it likes only at the risk of seeming implausible. Miss Ashton pushes implausibility to its limits in trying to make her case airtight, so that we keep thinking, "interesting, but most unlikely." For the whole plot of her book hinges upon this: that a large and varied group of people, interrelated by marriages, loves, servitudes, attachments of one sort or another, are all present in the London Zoo, unbeknownst to each other, on one July afternoon. And on that one afternoon, while they wander from lion cage to monkey house to aquarium, crossing and recrossing paths, all of their lives come to a head, all crises are resolved, while the metaphor of the zoo is made plain against that chosen background. Here and there a telling characterization or a fine reminiscent sketch appears, but the whole novel is constricted to lifelessness by the rigidity of the imposed design.

N. L. R.

CAN ALL THIS GRANDEUR PERISH? By James T. Farrell. Vanguard. 1937. $2.50.

This collection of short stories is essential to all admirers of Mr. Farrell but rather because all his qualities are sporadically present in it than because the narratives stand on their own merits. Mr. Farrell's talent is not quite at home in the short story form; he requires massiveness, the solidity of a thoroughly prepared and exhaustively developed structure, and cannot, or does not, make use of the effects latent in terseness and concentration. He is of the Egyptian, not the gothic, order; these pieces document but do not focus his intention, and they lack the richness of reference and interrelationship that his novels have. They seem, in fact, to be passages lifted from novels, not self-sustaining organisms, and they suffer from the truncation.

As such, as truncated parts of novels, they fill out Mr. Farrell's chart of the metropolis during the depression, the Irish slums, the Irish elite, and the intellectuals and other fauna associated with them. There is a chip from the "Studs Lonigan" series, there are two long nar-

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ratives about the Gregorys which would be better if the rest of the novel were filled in, there is an amusing skit about some South Side pinks on the Left Bank and a couple of not so good skits about other South Side exquisites, there are some preliminary studies for "A World I Never Made," and there is a piece called "Seventeen," an acid but compassionate study of adolescent love and pregnancy, which is the longest and—probably therefore—the best thing in the book. They have Mr. Farrell's relentlessness, his terrible understanding, and his power of magnificently evoking the metropolis, but they are sometimes clumsy and sometimes naive. They are parts of the world he unquestionably has made but they are two-dimensional, lacking the intricate and living relationships of his novels.

B. DV.

RETURN NOT AGAIN. By Annette Heard. Bobbs-Merrill. 1937. $2.50.

This novel tells in a vivid, rapidly moving style the everyday happenings and the dramatic events in the lives of a family of poor whites (peckerwoods) living in the Mississipi delta country. The young mother is above her group in brains, beauty, ambition, sensitiveness; and, she later learns, in paternal heritage. With the advice and generosity of her lover, a neighboring planter, she almost pulls her family up by her bootstraps from the itinerant tenant farming group to the stability and relative ease of those who own and till their acres. The ne'er-do-well habits of her husband combine with the cycle of weather and economics to loosen her tentative hold on security.

The book does not give the impression of being written by a reporter-novelist who has gone out to get material and cover a situation of news-value. Nor has it the facile implication of so many novels dealing with similar groups, that the enactment of a reform will immediately rectify ills which have been bred through generations of injustice The author seems to know her country and the difficult lives her people lead.

But her writing has few overtones, scant sense of humor, little beauty of style. When Miss Heard attempts a kind of poetic mysticism, as she does on occasion, she falls into that broad, deep moat of sentimentality which surround the disciplined simplicity of lyric prose. When she attempts bawdy talk the result is singularly lacking in humor or interest or credibility. While she shares with her characters their bitterness at the cruelty and indignity which the rich white puts upon the poor white by denying him the material advantages of civilization and by excluding him from social amenities, she seems to fail to see the equal cruelty and indignity of the treatment given by the poor white to the black.

One finishes the book with the feeling that the author has a certain talent for narrative, possesses knowledge of the ways of poor whites in the delta country, but has not succeeded in creating characters sufficiently alive to make their story of great concern to the reader.

P. S.

Brief Mention

Whether it be that the Coronation has focussed attention upon the British Isles or whether it is the normal interest in travel following upon reviving prosperity, for one cause or the other volumes for the journeyer to Great Britain have recently appeared in numbers. Among the best of them are the new publications in the English Countryside Series which Scribners have been bringing out over a period of years. These books are uniformly well written, well informed, and lavishly supplied with excellent photographs. The new additions to the series are three. "The Land of Wales," by Eiluned and Peter Lewis, covers less familiar ground than the others and covers it with material full of interest. The authors have adopted the chronological method of presentation, and describe the country in the order in which historical events have developed it. Their description is many-sided, touching upon archeology, the life of the people, the political, economic and social evolution, and portraying the natural background both by word and picture. "English Village Homes," by Sydney R. Jones, after an introductory chapter on the subject in general and another on the historical background, proceeds to a description of specific places, giving charm and atmosphere to its recital by frequent quotation. The book is illustrated, in addition to its excellent photographs, with drawings showing architectural detail and ornament. "The Old Towns of England," by

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Clive Rouse, deliberately excludes London from its discussion and touches only in passing on Cambridge and Oxford. For the rest, it searches out the most picturesque and important of the English cities and weaves together history, scene, and architecture into an interesting pattern. "Northern England and the Lakes," by Edmond Vale, is in form and intent similar to the foregoing volumes, but apparently a new series has been started under the title "The Face of Britain" to which it has been allocated. It is a well-written and well-proportioned description of the countryside and the industrial sections of Northern England. E. V. Lucas, whose Wanderer and other guides are, according to himself, being outdated by the rapid march of progress in London, has now issued a volume entitled "London Afresh" (Lippincott) which takes over nothing from his earlier books on the city except their general charm of manner and fulness of information. It is written with one eye to the American visitor and should prove one of the most popular of the works which travelers from this country rely on for assistance. Another useful volume is Jessie D. Wright's "London's Old Buildings" (Houghton Mifflin), which, as its title implies, concentrates on the landmarks of history and literature. In "Inn-Fires and Laughter" (Putnam), Amy Armour Smith departs from the impersonal manner of the foregoing works and offers a chronicle of the trip taken by herself and her husband through the British Isles that is lively but undistinguished.

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COLLECTORS of antiques, curios, Indian relics, etc., write me what you are interested in obtaining. Perhaps I can find what you are searching for. Hulette Masterson, Paris, Missouri.

Double-Crostics: No. 165

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

■	■	1-P	2-J	3-Q	■	4-X	5-O	6-J	■	7-N	■	8-D	9-S	10-R	■	11-V
12-W	13-I	■	14-J	15-O	16-N	■	17-B	18-V	■	19-X	20-D	21-U	22-G	23-H	24-E	25-P
■	26-J	27-Q	28-V	29-F	30-L	31-A	32-E	■	33-X	34-M	35-K	36-G	37-V	■	38-E	39-H
40-C	41-J	42-P	43-G	44-T	■	45-Y	46-F	47-H	48-J	49-V	50-L	51-G	■	52-I	53-U	■
54-D	55-P	56-A	57-U	58-S	59-X	■	60-I	61-L	62-V	63-P	■	64-H	65-E	66-L	67-D	68-J
69-H	■	70-J	71-F	72-A	73-L	74-T	75-M	■	76-G	77-Y	78-D	79-Q	80-B	81-V	82-F	■
83-Y	84-B	85-O	86-S	87-G	88-W	89-Q	■	90-O	91-N	92-B	■	93-T	94-D	95-M	96-X	97-F
■	98-P	99-K	100-R	■	101-O	102-K	103-E	■	104-G	105-B	106-C	107-V	108-M	■	109-O	110-N
111-E	■	112-M	113-B	114-P	115-K	■	116-S	117-V	118-I	119-G	■	120-R	121-B	122-N	123-I	■
124-H	125-Q	126-F	127-O	128-X	■	129-V	130-K	■	131-W	132-C	■	133-V	134-K	■	135-X	136-V
137-C	138-N	139-G	140-T	141-J	142-F	■	143-Q	144-K	145-I	■	146-M	147-U	■	148-Y	149-H	150-P
151-B	152-Q	153-J	154-S	155-V	■	156-V	157-W	158-G	159-C	160-R	■	161-T	162-A	163-I	164-E	■
165-Y	166-U	167-D	168-C	169-W	170-J	■	171-A	172-F	173-R	■	174-N	175-K	■	176-N	177-T	178-S
179-A	■	180-K	■	181-P	182-F	183-S	184-X	■	185-A	186-I	■	187-I	188-D	189-R	190-L	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. College in Massachusetts.
B. Novel by Borrow.
C. Treaded.
D. Affording a corrective.
E. Muse of Music.
F. Specify.
G. Superficial esthete.
H. Evasive, impalpable.
I. Spoonerism.
J. Not propitious.
K. Composure (Fr.).
L. Without stamina.
M. Great Hebrew prophet.
N. Magic helmet (Ger. myth.).
O. Member of a Philippine race.
P. Holiday for the bride and groom.
Q. A religious recluse.
R. Something diminutive.
S. European country.
T. Novel by Meredith.
U. Smutted, blackened.
V. Not in need of aid (comp.).
W. Name of many French kings.
X. Something or other.
Y. Carries on (war).

WORDS

A. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 171 56 162 179 72 31 185
B. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 105 113 121 92 80 84 151 17
C. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 168 137 106 132 159 40
D. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 94 167 54 188 67 20 78 8
E. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 111 65 164 32 24 38 103
F. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 82 182 142 126 172 97 29 46 71
G. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 51 139 76 36 43 22 104 87 119 158
H. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 39 149 47 64 23 124 69
I. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 52 163 13 123 186 60 118 187 145
J. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 141 2 48 41 70 153 68 14 26 170 6
K. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 134 144 99 102 130 35 175 180 115
L. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 73 30 190 61 66 50
M. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 108 112 146 75 34 95
N. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 174 7 138 110 91 122 16 176
O. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 90 85 5 101 15 109 127
P. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 63 1 42 55 25 181 98 150 114
Q. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 3 79 125 143 152 89 27
R. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 160 173 100 10 120 189
S. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 58 154 116 183 178 86 9
T. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 74 93 140 177 44 161
U. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 21 57 166 147 53
V. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 156 37 136 11 155 117 18 49 133 28 129 81 107 62
W. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 157 12 169 131 88
X. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 4 128 59 33 19 96 184 135
Y. ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ — 165 83 148 77 45

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

Marcia Passage

WE learned last week, with deepest regret, of the death after long illness of Mrs. Marcia Passage, who had been for several years manager of the Sunwise Turn Bookshop in New York City (one of the Doubleday, Doran chain). Mrs. Passage, a woman of rare charm and alert to all the finer values in literature, was a distinguished instance of the talents brought into our trade by women booksellers.

☞This week, on the second anniversary of the death of T. E. Lawrence, the Viking Press made an interesting announcement. Colonel Ralph H. Isham, by permission of Lawrence's executors, plans to publish a limited edition of the cancelled first chapter of the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom,* together with a memoir of Lawrence and a number of remarkable letters written to Colonel Isham by Lawrence. ☞The first chapter, which we thought when we read it was the most remarkable of the book, was not omitted for any reasons of discretion, but by the advice of Bernard Shaw who urged Lawrence to begin his story with the second chapter which plunges immediately into the Arabian scene. The cancelled chapter, which gives Lawrence's general comment on his war experience, is a superb document: of deeply-felt bitterness enhanced by masterful restraint. It will surely stand as one of the most memorable postscripts to the Great War. ☞The Cancelled Chapter will not be published until early autumn, in an edition limited to 1,000 copies; the price will necessarily be high.

☞We learned from the catalogue of the Nathaniel Hawthorne exhibition at the Lockwood Library, University of Buffalo, that Hawthorne wrote a story called *Main Street,* published with a preface by Julian Hawthorne in 1901. ☞Here's a souvenir for that agreeable poet R. P. Tristram Coffin whom we encountered at breakfast in the Hotel Wendell at Pittsfield. Mr. Coffin, who is devoted to his own Bowdoin College, should be amused by Hawthorne's letter (loaned to the Lockwood Library exhibition by the great collector Mr. W. T. H. Howe) from Bowdoin in 1824, to his sister, announcing his extreme eagerness to get home. He wants her to write a strong letter to the president:—

> If you are at a loss for an excuse, say that Mother is out of health, or that Uncle R. is going a journey on account of his health, and wishes me to attend him, or that Elizabeth is on a visit at some distant place and wishes me to come and bring her home. Or that George Archer has just arrived from sea. . . . Or that some of my relations are to die or be married, and my presence is necessary for the occasion. And lastly, if none of these excuses will suit you, and you can think of no other, write, and order me to come home without any. If you do not, I shall certainly forge a letter.

☞Mr. Coffin was telling us that he had narrowly escaped perishing of snow and cold by trying to drive through the Crawford Notch in April. ☞Partly his own fault, we told him. He has written so many charming poems about Nature, he's spoiled the old Dame and she turned on him.

MUNRO LEAF WITH FERDINAND AT THE A. B. A. CONVENTION

☞Phelps Soule has been for ten years Manager of the University of Pennsylvania Press; in honor of this decade of achievement the Publications Committee of the Press will hold a reception in his honor, May 27, at the Franklin Inn Club in Philadelphia. ☞The 59th annual Conference of the American Library Association will meet at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, N. Y. C., June 21-26. With other affiliated organizations, such as the Music, Law and Special Research librarians, the Bibliographical Society, etc., this group will represent a combined membership of over 17,000. Mayor La Guardia will welcome the delegates at the opening session, at which Mr. Malcolm Wyer, president of the A. L. A. and librarian of the Denver Public Library, will make the chief address. ☞The Viking Press sends us, as a souvenir of the Booksellers' Convention, a photograph of the salmon-pink Ferdinand (with one of his creators) whose cavorting entertained the trade before the annual banquet. The bull was enacted by two children from the Lincoln School.

☞We learn—by the roundabout way of reading Frank Rosengren's notes from his bookshop in San Antonio, Texas—that the Peter Pauper Press (Mount Vernon, N. Y.) has issued a new edition of *Uncle Remus,* with illustrations by Fritz Eichenberg. To us, Uncle Remus is pretty nearly the greatest American book and we can't see it in print too often. But doubt whether any artist can ever take the place of A. B. Frost.

☞*Trade Winds* wishes all happiness to our friend and former colleague, Mr. C. B. Boutell, who has moved across 45th Street to manage Advertising and Publicity for G. P. Putnam's Sons. Mr. Quentin Bossi at Putnam's has moved up to the post of Sales Manager.

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